

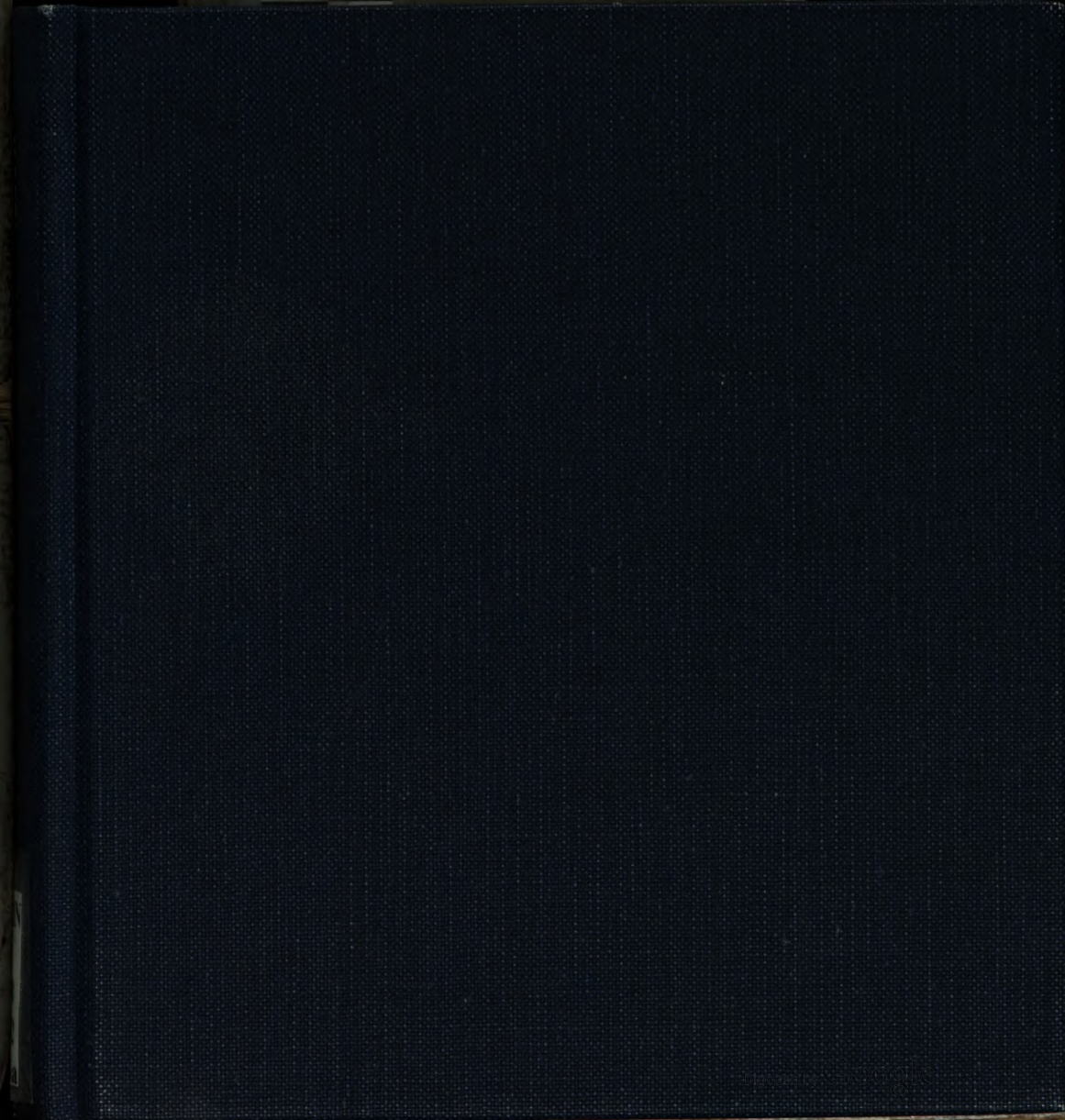
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MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY.

BY  
HELEN MOORE.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY.

1886.

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TO  
L C. M



## PREFATORY NOTE.

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I WISH to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Tiffany and to Mr. Cutter, Librarians of the Boston Public and Athenæum Libraries, for the kindness with which they have aided in procuring books not otherwise accessible to me.

I am beside indebted to Mr. C. Kegan Paul for making clear to me some passages in the lives of the Shelleys upon which otherwise I could not have spoken with decision.

I wish also to express my thanks to Lady Shelley for her courteous interest, and especially for confirming the impression I had formed of Mary Shelley's disposition, which, coming to me while weighing the force of Trelawny's attacks upon her memory, was peculiarly grateful, and enabled me to place the two estimates side by side.

H. M.

PHILADELPHIA, 1886.



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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No life of Mrs. Shelley has hitherto been published, a fact sufficiently surprising in an age that is nothing if not poly-biographical. The period from 1851, the date of her death, to the present time has been peculiar, quite as much for the thoroughness with which it has exhausted the immediate past for subjects for biography, as for the minuteness with which it has pursued those subjects when found. Moreover, within this period there has been at least one distinct Shelley revival. This critical habit of biography, as well as the minute method of poetic criticism, requires of us the knowledge of everything that went to form the environment of the poet, demanding that we shall search for the source of every influence that moulded his life and thoughts. There has been no dearth of biographies of Shelley, nor is there anywhere a denial of the part that Mary Shelley bore toward the period of his best poesy, in the spiritual uplifting of the poet's hands when disease and disaster rendered physical aid vain. On the contrary, there is a general



recognition of this; yet next to nothing is given us from which independently we can form any estimate of her who was thus a force in his life. Nowhere is there gathered into one volume the records of her life. In biography she has hitherto had no separate existence, no individuality.

But while this is certainly surprising, it is not without an explanation,—an explanation lying strangely enough in the fact that she was Mrs. Shelley; for the true reason why we find no life of her separate from Shelley, is because in a sense she had no separate life. Before he came her life was empty; after his death it was the tomb from which her lord had risen. Between these two periods she lived,—lived for him and because of him. It must not be inferred from this that she was one of those natures who, without mind of their own, simply respond to the touch of a stronger hand.

Her vigorous intellect, her individuality, her courage, as marked as that of any of the world's heroines, should put that question at rest; but this intellect and courage, this strong personality, were latent; nothing in her life had called them into being. Too remarkable to be ever commonplace, the people and events of her life awakened in her no response. They came and went and left her as they found her.

But just in proportion as she was thus indifferent to common things about her, to that extent was she

able to respond and to awaken response in the rare nature of Shelley. The union of these two was like the chemic union of a base, separately inert, but which combined became a potent force. In that union she realized her true life; into it her separate being merged. The life of Mrs. Shelley thus presents the truly womanly life,—that complementary one, to which a perfect union (what so rare!) gives a vigor, an individuality, a beauty, denied to those lives which spend themselves in unmated unions or in single-hand combats with the world.

While it is true that Mrs. Shelley's place among eminent women does not rest upon the circumstance that she was Shelley's wife, it is in every sense due to the fact that she was his companion. The nature and quality of this companionship is at once an index and a test of her character. It was not that an erratic genius had made her the object of his wayward passion, or even that she was the recipient of his genuine tenderness. It was very much more than this. Think how different Mrs. Shelley's place from that held by any of the various loves of Goethe or Byron. It may not be overstating it to say that one of the chief interests we have in her, arises from a worthy curiosity to know what manner of woman it was who could be so completely the companion, who could hold such close fellowship with so marked a genius as Shelley. It is for this reason that his character

must ever be a prominent element in the life of Mrs. Shelley. For the same reason, due prominence must be given to the nature of that union which welded these twain together in a spiritual oneness so instant, an intellectual harmony so complete,—in fine, a union so unlike those ordinarily made on earth, and so like those which we are told are made in Heaven, that an inconsequential world promptly decided that it had been made in Hell.

Certainly, Mrs. Shelley does not owe her fame to the extent of her literary labors. Of these we shall do more than merely speak, finding in one of them—"Frankenstein"—a peculiar literary faculty. But she must be ranked among those literary women whose true province is to influence and stimulate others; who are receptive, appreciative, and incentive, rather than productive; for among the distinguished women of the world there is a manifest division, based upon this feature, and not so apparent among men.

Men may, it seems, be at once possessed of the power and faculty of literary production, and at the same time exert the maximum of influence upon their personal surroundings, as Milton, Pope, Rousseau, Goethe, Byron, Carlyle, Emerson, and Shelley himself. But women possessed of the intellectual *timbre*, styled literary, fall naturally into two classes, one possessed of a power to produce beyond the scope made apparent by their personal influence,

which may even give no promise of such power; the other owning and wielding a far greater influence over men about them, which gives richer promise, but which fails to transmute itself into a permanent literary yield. Of the former class are George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Browning, Miss Austin, while in the latter class are Margaret Fuller, Mary Wollstonecraft, Madame de Stael, Madame Recamier, and a host of French women, of whom Madame Du Defend may be taken as the type.

Without doubt it is to this latter class that Mrs. Shelley must be assigned; so that in proportion as her permanent contribution to the literary stock of the world is small, must we the more earnestly seek in her private life and its reflected lights, for those qualities which have made her unquestionably eminent among women.

The intimate blending of the influences which awakened the mind and formed the character of Mrs. Shelley make the study of her life peculiarly difficult, and necessitate a broader treatment in accord with the responsive nature of her growth. Thus our study becomes largely an inquiry into the factors of her life: Fortunately these factors are themselves intensely interesting persons, so that the time spent with them is a period spent with people quite as remarkable and almost as admirable as Mary Shelley herself; for it is from the characters of Mary Woll-

stonecraft, William Godwin, and Percy Bysshe Shelley that we must learn the influences that shaped and re-appeared in the life of the daughter of the first and the wife of the last. What wonder if the being so endowed possessed the beauty, the charm, the passion, the courage, the mental vigor, the sincerity of her mother,—the amiability, the reasonableness, the industry, and the subtle analytical powers of her father? If to these we add the companionship, the spiritual rapport, the enthusiasm, the elevation of thought, the pantheistical love of the beautiful, and those nameless forces evolved only in the perfect union of mind and soul which first drew and then held her and Shelley together, we shall have but one regret, that at best we can learn all too little of the life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

**"They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,  
Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.  
I wonder not, for one then left this earth  
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,  
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled  
Of its departing glory; still her fame  
Shines on thee thro' the tempests dark and wild  
Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim  
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name."**

**SHELLEY.**



# MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN, the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, was born on the 30th of August, 1797, in Polygon, Somers-town, London. Her father was the son of a dissenting minister in Wisbeach, Cambridgeshire, and had had the education common to the sons of the country clergy,—that is, in his extreme youth he went to a good old village dame, who, with aged and trembling voice, taught him his letters, and sought, by “godly and pious books for the young,” to impress upon his youthful mind the importance of religion.

After a few months of this good woman's instruction, he was sent to a day-school at some distance from his home. Here, it is related, appalled by the sinful irreligion of one of his comrades, he spent much of his time in preaching to him about “death



and damnation:" having appropriated all the austere Calvinist doctrines of his father, he held them over the head of the sinful boy. He stealthily procured the key to his father's church, and there, in the pulpit, did he with serious ardor recount to his trembling audience of one the fearful consequences of his guilt.

In the autumn of 1773, William Godwin went to Hoxton College, where he remained five years. He had intended to become a dissenting minister, like his father, and during his summer vacations and after his departure from college he had the care of a parish and preached occasionally; but it does not appear that he was ever more than a candidate.

In 1785, Godwin took permanent lodgings in London and began that career of letters and that struggle with poverty which ended only with his life. He was first known as a valuable political writer on the Liberal side, and by virtue of his political opinions began to collect around him that circle of friends which he carefully extended until it comprehended all those best known in literature and politics. He was the writer of several books, the principal one being "Political Justice." This was published in 1793, and immediately went through three editions. Of his other works, his two novels, "Caleb Williams" and "St. Leon," the "Answer to Malthus," and the "History of the Commonwealth of England," are perhaps all that are now remembered.

As the author of "Political Justice," he takes a high place among elemental thinkers. Every original and earnest writer has one work on which he has expended the best of his faculties, the most careful and logical conclusions of his mind. The names of Adam Smith, Hume, Darwin, Milton, Goethe immediately suggest to one the name of that work by which each is best known, that work into which each threw the weight of his vigor and genius.

"Political Justice" made no little stir among thoughtful persons. It is an inquiry into the society, government, and morals of a community; it contains broad and uncompromising theories, for Godwin was not the man to shrink from any conclusion to which his reason brought him. He was a logical and courageous thinker, a fearless advocate of equity, an enthusiast in the cause of just liberty of thought and action. He cried out, if any of Godwin's calm and moderately expressed sentences can be called a cry, against the constraints of law, government, and society. He believed that in time, education and environment would teach each man to rule himself; that self-government is the only real government.

Many of Godwin's theories were extreme and futile, many bore the stamp of truth which time and custom have now demonstrated. "Political Justice" in a measure prepared the social and moral atmosphere in which we now live, as did "Emilie" the educational,

and Darwin's "Origin of Species" the scientific. The present generation is prone to underrate the value of a work whose once rare and startling precepts are now familiar and accepted.

Godwin was a man who possessed many lovable traits of mind and character. He was gentle and considerate of the feelings of others, cheerful and even in disposition, philosophic in temperament, and to a moderation that amounted to coldness, he united an enthusiasm for the good. As a natural complement to these qualities, he had an inordinate vanity, an over keen and exaggerated sense of others' opinions of himself, together with a disposition to magnify the unconscious phrases of his friends into intended slights. In many of the relations of life he exhibited high-souled and amiable benevolence, and whenever he saw an occasion of aiding a friend or fellow, by counsel or appreciation, by gifts, by well-timed and expressed sympathy, he forthwith offered the same. He was, too, in all political oppression, intrepid and morally courageous. Once, indeed, early in his career, he placed himself in imminent danger of transportation, by throwing himself athwart Parliament, and doing disinterestedly all within his power to frustrate a governmental sentence which seemed to him unjust. This sense of justice was an engrossing passion of Godwin's life, than which none was stronger, not even his sensitive vanity.

That moral courage which in youth was both noble

and active, lost in old age its unconditioned fearlessness, and expressed itself only in theoretical and abstract disquisitions and prudent and wordy counsel. Thought in his late years lost the brooding concentration which produces action, and mayhap that clear and sunlike vision of nice questions grew dim and obscured, more commonplace and conformable to the opinions of those around him. Nor is it surprising that such should have been the result in a nature like Godwin's. He no longer had the elasticity of enthusiasm, and his vanity and extreme sensitiveness to disapprobation lacked the reassuring support of Mary Wollstonecraft's companionship.

The present generation owes much to Godwin's clear and discriminating intellect. It was at his suggestion that the "*Tales from Shakespeare*," by Charles and Mary Lamb, were written. He first directed the attention of the English mind to the beauties of "*Don Quixote*," and he insisted that Chapman's "*Homer*" was one of the treasures of the English language.

Godwin's reading was vast and discursive. The methodical character of his mind is shown by his minutes of the number of pages read in a day, of letters and visitors received; and his vanity, by the preservation of all papers pertaining to himself, and careful copies of his own letters. Speaking of the routine of her father's life, Mrs. Shelley writes thus:

"He rose between seven and eight, read some clas-

sic author before breakfast. From nine till twelve or one he occupied himself with his pen. He found that he could not exceed this measure of labor with any advantage to his own health or the work in hand. The rest of the morning was spent in reading or seeing his friends. When at home he dined at four, but during his bachelor life he frequently dined out. His dinner at home at this time was simple enough. He had no regular servant; an old woman came in the morning to clean and arrange his rooms, and, if necessary, she prepared a mutton-chop, which was put in a Dutch oven."

His home and his scanty means were ever at the service of his many needy relatives. One of his principles of action was to acquire only the income necessary for his daily wants, and as his relatives made his house their rendezvous when in London, he was oftentimes in debt.

Godwin was about forty at the time of his meeting with Mary Wollstonecraft. He had long been contemplating with gracious favor the marriage state, and had asked his sister Hannah to select for him a wife, which office she eagerly endeavored to fulfil. Meanwhile he had himself made some advances to a lady of his own acquaintance; but his friendship for Mary Wollstonecraft soon occupied his whole mind and heart.

Mary Wollstonecraft was born in 1759. She also

was one of the forces that helped to mould the nineteenth century. She also, like Godwin, strove to give freedom to men and women, and to make purity of motive the basis of morality. Through a varied and mournful life she always acted upon those principles which she believed highest. Her chief work is the "Vindication of the Rights of Women;" and as Godwin in his "Political Justice," so did she throw into this book all the strength of her soul. Honestly, fearlessly, eloquently she treats of every subject she touches, from the education of children to the position of women. The book is crude, assertive, and inaccurate, but it is written with the imperious earnestness of a thoughtful and sincere mind. Mary Wollstonecraft was perhaps the most gifted woman of the eighteenth century,—of clear, penetrating insight, of remarkable energy of purpose, quick to perceive, quick to formulate, she struck out original lines of thought on every subject which she touched.

Difficulties of all sorts beset her family and her home. Her father, a spendthrift and an inebriate, was violent and abusive in temper. Her mother was weak and tyrannical, and withal an invalid. There were small children to be provided for and the older ones to educate. Mary Wollstonecraft added to the income of the home by being teacher and governess, both in Ireland and England. She sacrificed health and time to do for her brothers and sisters. Many

times the care of the whole wretched family rested on her brave young shoulders.

In 1788 she came to London, and took lodgings in a lonely part of the city, near Blackfriars Bridge, there to support herself by magazine articles and translations, and indeed to send most of her hard-earned means to her sisters and brothers, who ill repaid her for her noble care. With wretched health, in the midst of poverty and times of morbid despondency, ill clothed, ill nourished, she worked away over her translations and tales, bearing the still greater strain and anxiety of the calamities of her delinquent and disappointing family. Here it was, in these forsaken and out-of-the-way lodgings, that this gifted and struggling being wrote the "Vindication of the Rights of Women." It earned for her a rather formidable reputation. It was much too outspoken for the times.

In December, 1792, Mary went to Paris. It was there that she met Gilbert Imlay, an American. Between these two was soon formed a strong mutual attachment. A marriage in the then political state of France was next to impossible to a foreigner; besides, to Mary Wollstonecraft, who had in her own family and that of her friends seen so much anguish accrue from the marriage-tie, the bond of love seemed more sacred than civil contract.

In the autumn of 1793 a daughter, Fanny, was

born. Soon after, Imlay, engrossed in speculations away from Paris, his attachment gone, deserted mother and child. Heart-broken and bewildered, Mary Wollstonecraft returned to England, once more and under darker griefs than before, to support herself and her child by her old occupation of literature. It was after this, after her return from a journey to Norway, after her final separation from Imlay, that Godwin met her, and that the acquaintance ripened into friendship. Mrs. Shelley writes thus of her mother :

“Mary Wollstonecraft was one of those beings who appear once, perhaps in a generation to gild humanity with a ray which no difference of opinion nor chance of circumstance can cloud. Her genius was undeniable. She had been bred in the hard school of adversity, and, having experienced the sorrows entailed on the poor and oppressed, an earnest desire was kindled within her to diminish their sorrows. Her sound understanding, her intrepidity, her sensibility, and eager sympathy stamped all her writings with force and truth, and endowed them with a tender charm that enchants while it enlightens. She was one whom all loved who had ever seen. Many years have passed since that beating heart has been laid in the cold still grave, but no one who has ever seen her, speaks of her without enthusiastic veneration.

“Did she witness an act of injustice, she boldly came forward to point it out and induce its repara-



tion. Was there discord among friends or relatives, she stood by the weaker party, and her earnest appeals and kindness awoke latent affection and healed all wounds. 'Open as day to melting charity,' with a heart brimful of generous affection, yearning for sympathy, she had fallen on evil days, and her life had been one course of hardship, poverty, lonely struggle, and bitter disappointment.

"Godwin met her at the moment when she was deeply depressed by the ingratitude of one utterly incapable of appreciating her excellence; who had stolen her heart, and availed himself of her excessive and thoughtless generosity and lofty independence of character to plunge her in difficulties and then desert her. Difficulties—worldly difficulties, indeed—she set at naught, compared with her despair of good, her confidence betrayed, and, when once she could conquer the misery that clung to her heart, she struggled cheerfully to meet the poverty that was her inheritance, and to do her duty by her darling child. It was at this time that Godwin again met her at the house of her friend, Mrs. Hayes, having done so occasionally before she went to Norway."

Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft did not marry for some time. Mrs. Shelley writes, "He was very averse to marriage. Poverty was a strong argument against it. When he concocted a code of morals in 'Political Justice,' he warmly opposed a system which

exacted a promise to be kept to the end of life, in spite of every alteration of circumstance and feeling. Objections to marriage are usually expected to infer an approval and even practice of illicit intercourse. This was far from being the case with Godwin. He was in a supreme degree a conscientious man, utterly opposed to anything like vice or libertinism; nor did his sense of duty permit him to indulge in any deviation from the laws of society, which, though he might regard as unjust, could not, he felt, be infringed without deception and injury to any woman who should act in opposition to them. The loss of usefulness to both parties, which the very stigma brings, the natural ties of children, entailing duties which necessitate the duration of any connection, and which, if tampered with, must end in misery. All these motives were imperative in preventing him from acting upon theories which yet he did not like to act against."

They were, however, married the 29th day of March, 1797, in St. Pancras Church, Godwin's faithful friend, Marshall, and the parish clerk being the only witnesses. They still retained their separate lodgings, and their manner of life was much the same as it had been. Both had their own work, their own circle of friends, their own interests, and both regulated their time to their own wishes. Mary Wollstonecraft still kept up her writing and translations, and Godwin

went every morning to his study in the Evesham Buildings.

On the 30th of August, Mary Godwin, afterward Mary Shelley, was born, and a few days later Mary Wollstonecraft lay dead. She was buried in St. Pancras church-yard.

After a few months of complete companionship with Mary Wollstonecraft, Godwin was left the mournful task of writing a sketch of her life, and of editing her unpublished writings. He at once brought his papers from the Evesham Buildings, and took up his abode with his two little children, Fanny, Imlay's daughter, and Mary, his own child, in his wife's home. There he lived in a dreary, hap-hazard way, with the children and their nurses. One can imagine the discomfort that he suffered; his student-like, methodical habits disturbed, his time interrupted, his mind called away from his books to a thousand minor incidents, the whole care of the house falling on his shoulders.

For, during Mary Wollstonecraft's life, there had been absolutely no alteration in Godwin's carefully regulated days; the care of affairs had devolved upon her. In the life of a man who had spent forty single and undisturbed years, whose habits had become crystallized, these demands must have made no small revolution. Certain it is that he either doubted his ability to care for this household, or that he had found a wife of inestimable value, for six months after Mary

Wollstonecraft's death, after he had declared that *his* sorrow had no consolation, we find him sending importunate love letters and proposal of marriage to a lady whom he had seen just four times.

Whatever the material loss Mary Wollstonecraft's death was to her husband and children, of the spiritual and moral loss the half cannot be told. She was to Godwin a strong, broad, beautiful influence. She had more character, more purpose, more intimate sympathy with and knowledge of human nature than he, —she would have softened his pedantry, would have helped him to realize his dreams and theories of humanity.

To her children she would have been friend and guiding star. She would have been like the gracious spirit that ever presided over the hearth-stones of the old Greeks, and her sweet presence and warm heart would have kept glowing and eternal that sacred fire. But her death changed all this not more than did Godwin's second marriage in 1801.

He had a large circle of friends, and shortly after his wife died he began to resume his visits to them. He frequently took little Fanny, to whom he was tenderly attached, with him when he dined out. Good friends of Mary Wollstonecraft and of Godwin, Mrs. Revely and Mrs. Fenwick, kept kindly oversight of the little Mary, while Godwin was living thus alone in Polygon. And it was from Mrs. Revely,

afterwards Mrs. Gisborne, that Mary Shelley in later years learned all that she knew of her mother.

Mrs. Shelley has left an interesting note of Mrs. Revely's early life and her friendship with Godwin before his union with Mary Wollstonecraft. "Maria Revely," she writes, "was the daughter of an English merchant at Constantinople, named James. Her education had been wild and singular, and had early developed the peculiar and deep-seated sensibility which through life formed her character. Her father had left her in infancy with her mother in England,—he might be said to have deserted them, for they lived in great penury. She remembered once asking her mother for a farthing to buy a cake, which was given her with such reluctance, on the score of poverty, that with a passion of tears she returned it. Mrs. James at length took a desperate resolution and sailed to Constantinople with her daughter, then eight years old. Mr. James had no inclination to renew his conjugal duties. He had in his house the wife of one of his skippers as house-keeper, and it was generally believed that she stood to him in a more intimate relation. He was, however, delighted with his little daughter, and had her stolen from her mother and secreted in the house of a Turk, till he had persuaded Mrs. James, by the promise of an annuity, to return to England alone. The little Maria was then taken home and brought up with sedulous care. Many accomplishments were

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taught her, and on one of the first side-saddles which appeared in the East she accompanied her father in his rides in the environs of Constantinople. While yet a mere child she looked womanly and formed, and entered into the society of European merchants and diplomatists. Having no proper chaperon, she was apt to run wild as she might, and at a very early age had gone through the romance of life. When she was fifteen her father left Constantinople and went to Rome. She had shown great talent for painting, and it was her wish that she should cultivate this art under the tuition of Angelica Kauffman. Her studies were, however, interrupted by her early marriage. Her beauty attracted the admiration of Mr. Revely, a young English architect travelling for improvement; they married and came to England.

“Mr. Revely’s means were small, his father being still alive, and his marriage imprudent, for Mr. James, who acted ill in all the relations of life, refused to consent to the match, only, it would seem, as an excuse for giving his daughter no fortune. From the genial climate, the luxuries, the gay and refined society which had at times surrounded her, Mrs. Revely found herself transported to a situation but little removed from penury, demanding an economy and a self-denial in expenditure of the most painful kind. She found herself among the middling class of English people, ignorant, narrow-minded and bigoted. She felt fallen on evil

days ; the fairy lights had disappeared from life ; sedulous occupation bestowed on the necessities of life was varied only by society which did not possess a ray of intellect and had but little refinement.

“ She was very young and very beautiful, and possessed a peculiar charm of character in her deep sensibility, and an ingenuous modesty that knew no guile ; this was added to ardor in the pursuit of knowledge, a liberal and unquenchable curiosity. Parties ran high in those days. Her husband joined the Liberal side, and entered with enthusiasm into the hopes and expectations of political freedom, which then filled every heart to bursting. The consequence of these principles was to lead to the acquaintance of many of their popular advocates, and among them, with Godwin and Holcroft. There was a gentleness and yet a fervor in the minds of both Mrs. Revely and Godwin that led to sympathy. He was ready to gratify her desire for knowledge, and she drank eagerly of the philosophy which he offered. It was pure but warm friendship, which might have grown into another feeling had they been differently situated. As it was, Godwin saw only in her a favorite pupil, a charming friend, a woman whose conversation and society were fascinating and delightful ; but his calm and philosophic heart was undisturbed by any of those feelings which in natures less happily tempered would too readily have stepped in to disturb and injure.”

Nevertheless, shortly after the loss of Mary Wollstonecraft, after an unsuccessful attempt to marry Miss Lee, a lady whom he had seen but four times, accident disposing of Mr. Revely, Godwin within a month of his death importuned Mrs. Revely to become his wife. Though she had had little fondness for her husband, Mrs. Revely felt his loss keenly. "From the chamber of death," writes Mrs. Shelley, "his widow rushed to a remote and desolate room at the top of the house, in a state bordering on frenzy: for a week she remained in the same place, in the same state. She and her husband had at times disagreed, and believed themselves unsuited to each other. But he was the husband of her early youth, the father of her adored son, the friend and companion of nearly fifteen years. She was endowed with the keenest sensibility, and her heart received a shock from which she could with difficulty recover.

"Mr. Godwin heard of Mr. Revely's death at the house where he dined on the same day. He became thoughtful and entirely silent; he already revolved the future in his mind. Maria Revely had been a favorite pupil, a dear friend, a woman whose beauty and manners he ardently admired. After his wife's death, his visits and attentions had excited Mr. Revely's jealousy, and they became to a great degree discontinued. His uprightness and candor of character made him dis-  
tain the suspicions, but he withdrew, unwilling to be



the cause of domestic feud. It was, however, his plan to yield but little to form and etiquette, and before Mr. Revely had been dead a month he did not scruple to ask to see his widowed friend, and to make her understand the feelings and prospects with which his visits would be paid. She at first refused to see him and several letters passed between them."

"You are invited to form the sole happiness," writes the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, six months after her death, to Mrs. Revely, "of one of the most known men of the age, of one whose principles, whose temper, whose thoughts you have been long acquainted with, and will, I believe, confess their universal constancy. This connection I should think would restore you to self-respect, would give security to your future peace, and insure for you no mean degree of respectability. What you propose to choose in opposition to this I hardly know how to describe to you. . . . How singularly perverse and painful is my fate. When all obstacles interposed between us, when I had a wife, when you had a husband, you said you loved me, for years loved me! Could you for years be deceived? Now that calamity on the one hand, and no unpropitious fortune on the other have removed these obstacles, it seems your thoughts are changed, you have entered into new thoughts and reasonings." And in his last letter to her he writes, "You always professed the highest regard for Mrs. Godwin, naturally it would

be expected you should feel some interest in her children and mine: are these motives all at once become nothing to you?"

Godwin's letters and entreaties could not prevail upon Mrs. Revely, and it was with real disappointment that he learned of her marriage to Mr. Gisborne in the next year. He was very glad, during that summer, 1800, to divert his mind by a visit to Ireland, where he spent six weeks. His home letters are playful and charming.

"Tell Mary I will not give her away, and she shall be nobody's little girl but papa's. Papa is gone away, but papa will very soon come back again, and see the Polygon across two fields from the trunks of the trees at Camden Town. Will Mary and Fanny come to meet me?"

"I depute to Fanny and Mr. Collins, the gardener, the care of the garden. Tell her I wish to find it spruce, cropped, weeded, and mowed at my return, and if she can save me a few strawberries, and a few beans without spoiling, I will give her six kisses for them. But then Mary must have six kisses too, because Fanny has six."

"And, now, what shall I say for my poor little girls? I hope they have not forgotten me; I think of them every day, and should be glad if the wind was more favorable to blow them a kiss apiece from Dublin to Polygon. I have seen Mr. Grattan's little girls, and

Lady Mountcashel's little girls, and they are very nice children, but I have seen none that I love half so well or think half so good as my own."

And this last note, "Ah! poor Fanny, here is another letter from papa, and what do you think he says about the little girls in it? Would pretty little Mary have apprehension enough to be angry if I did not put in her name? Look at the map. This is Sunday that I am now writing. Before next Sunday I shall have crossed that place there, what you see marked as sea, between Ireland and England, and shall hope, indeed, to be half-way home. That is not a very long while, now, is it? My visit to Ireland is almost done. Perhaps I shall be on the sea in a ship the very moment Marshall is reading this letter to you. There is about going in a ship in Mrs. Barbauld's book. But I shall write another letter that shall come two or three days after this, and then I shall be in England. And in a day or two after that I shall hope to see Fanny and Mary and Marshall sitting on the trunks of the trees."

Of the gentle Marshall Mrs. Shelley has written, "There was another man, a fellow-student, and an aspirant to the honors of literature. The booksellers of London in his day knew him well, and many a contemporary author fallen on evil days, many a widow and orphan had cause to remember the benevolent disposition, the strenuous exertions, the kind

and intelligent countenance of James Marshall. His talents not permitting a higher range, he became a translator and index maker, a literary jobber. In a thousand ways he was useful to Godwin, who, sensitive, proud, and shy, whose powers of persuasion lay in the force of his reasoning, often found the more sociable and insinuating manners of his friend of use in transacting matters of business with editors and publishers. They often shared their last shilling together, and the success of any of his friend's plans was hailed by Marshall as a glorious triumph. Godwin, whose temper was quick, and, from an earnest sense of being in the right, somewhat despotic on occasions, assumed a good deal of superiority and some authority. Marshall sometimes submitted, sometimes rebelled, but they were always reconciled at last, and the good-humored friend was always at hand to assist to the utmost Godwin's more intellectual exertions, in copying or in walking from one end of the town to the other."

In the spring of 1801, there arrived in the house next to the one in which Godwin lived with his odd family, which consisted of his instalments of country relatives,—of this faithful Marshall, who was devoted worshipper, enthusiastic friend, amanuensis, chief confidant, and literary hack, and with whom Godwin quarrelled as was his wont with every close friend,—of his two little girls and their nurse, the latter a lady,

half house-keeper, half companion, who, sensitive and exacting, was jealous of Godwin's comings and goings, who would not have been averse to being the next Mrs. Godwin, and was yet holding a sort of engagement with one of his young protégés,—there came to live in the house next to this heterogeneous family a lady, a widow, clever, energetic, and handsome.

And it came about, that as the sage sat in his little balcony, where her fond eyes had doubtless seen him many times, the enthusiastic lady spake to him in these winged words: "Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?" This honeyed phrase, which the immortal Godwin did not find cloying to his taste, began an acquaintance which at the end of the year resulted in marriage. The ceremony took place in Shoreditch Church, the faithful Marshall and the parish clerk, as at that earlier marriage, being the only witnesses. And this Mrs. Clairmont became the second Mrs. Godwin.

That Godwin loved Mary Wollstonecraft as a man or a woman loves only once in a lifetime, I believe. Nevertheless there were many reasons that urged him to take unto himself another wife. In four years he had ceased to be romantic; he was now a cautious, thoughtful man of forty-four, who had an increasing respect for the institutions of society, and who felt the care of the two little girls to be beyond him. He wanted a wise and prudent house-keeper who at the

same time could bestow on his two children, daughters of that illustrious being, the minute attention due to their material wants. Like a sensible man he married Mrs. Clairmont, the provident house-keeper, the caretaker whom he thought necessary for the welfare of his home, who would have for his children the solicitude of a mother.

Godwin always remained a man of much natural beauty of character, but he did succumb to all those prescriptions of society, not only in action but in honest thought, which as a younger person he had considered only the mutable institutions of man. He learned to consider of value that position and social standing which can only be held under the limitations of convention, on which he and Mary Wollstonecraft had expended so much subtle reasoning and analysis. When in later years he writes to his daughter, Mrs. Shelley, "be useful, be *respectable*, be happy," one can see how vital had become to him the estimation of society.

Mrs. Clairmont brought to Godwin's home Charles and Jane, two children of her former marriage. This lady caused Mary Godwin real grief. She was to Mary, in her childhood, harsh, quick-tempered, unsympathetic; in her girlhood she denied her every advantage and possibility that her rarely-endowed nature craved, estranging Godwin from his daughter's true interest by her jealous disposition, and in after-life

making the growing affection and companionship between father and daughter, by this same jealous interference, a matter of difference between Godwin and herself.

Though she ever had an admiration for her husband, she was exacting and overbearing, ungenerous in her estimates, complaining and fretful in disposition,—pitifully unfit to take the charge of that household. To occupy the position of companion and adviser to three such sensitively organized beings as Godwin and Mary and Fanny, was to hold their happiness in her hands ; for it virtually lies in the power of the woman to make the hearthstone a place of joy or of bickering unrest. That Mrs. Clairmont made this home very unhappy, and by her jealous interference often caused temporary estrangement between Godwin and his old friends, Lamb, Holcroft, and others who suffered at her hands give testimony. Lamb, in a fit of annoyance, writes of her to Coleridge as “that d—d Mrs. Godwin.”

At the time of his second marriage, and for a few years after, Godwin was involved in the most discouraging pecuniary difficulties. His only means of support was the income which he derived from his pen. His wife—energetic, mentally active, “a managing woman,” as she calls herself—therefore induced Godwin, in 1805, to enter into the publishing business. He hired a small house in Hanway Street, Oxford Street,

and under the name of his foreman, his own being in such ill odor on account of his radical opinions that it would have been disastrous to use it, began the business which involved him in lawsuits and financial calamities for years to come. He wrote and published, under the name of "Baldwin's Fables," stories and histories for children,—charming little books they were, too,—on which work he and his wife expended much labor. Mrs. Godwin in the main had the supervision of the shop, and Charles Lamb complains pathetically of her wretched taste in publishing the "Tales" with some grotesquely inferior copperplate illustrations. . .

After awhile the publishing business increased, and it was necessary to remove it to larger quarters. It was established under the name of M. J. Godwin & Co., in a building in Skinner Street, Holborn, adjoining which was a comfortable dwelling-house, to which, in the autumn of 1807, the family removed from the house in Somerstown, with its memories of Mary Wollstonecraft, memories of the companionship of the higher, wider life that Godwin had led under her influence.

Were the associations of that place dear to Godwin? They must have been to the little Mary, who it is said was so much like her dead mother. A child older in thought and feeling than her ten years would make her; loving, revering the character of her mother; with eager, imperious ways, mystic, shining eyes, fer-



vent spirits, unloved by her step-mother, unappreciated by her father, she in the way peculiar to sensitive children must have brooded over the memories of that spot so endeared to her mother's name, which had once been filled by her mother's presence. Little Fanny Imlay, pliant and even in temperament, with sweet, womanly ways, who was three years Mary's senior, must have remembered that mother, have been able to give to her sister faint impressions of a tender being who had moved about the rooms, who supplied her childish wants, who had sat writing at a certain table; perhaps there was one window at which the dimly-recalled being always wrote. Perhaps Fanny could even remember caresses and endearing words, for children remember such things.

The shop in Skinner Street flourished, and one gets a pretty picture now and then of the family life; Godwin writing continuously; Mrs. Godwin taking oversight of the work in the building next; the children, Fanny, Mary, and the little William, who was born to Mrs. Godwin in 1803, saying their lessons. Charles Clairmont, a charming and intelligent boy, was at Charter-House School, and Jane, the eldest of the children, whose character was far from agreeable, had masters or outside education.

Godwin's life at this time was simple, his pleasures few. Business and domestic affairs pressed heavily upon him, though no nature was more cheerfully free

from useless pecuniary worry. If he had money he paid the bills when they fell due. If he had none himself he begged or borrowed it from his friends with perfect good feeling. It was only when such natural avenues of resource were closed to him that affairs demanded serious consideration. Thomas Noon Talfourd has left a charming description of this characteristic of Godwin's.

"He asked his friends for aid without scruple," writes Talfourd, "considering that their means were justly the due of one who toiled in thought for their inward life, and had little time to provide for his own outward existence; and took their excuses when offered without doubt or offence. The very next day after I had been honored and delighted by an introduction to him at Lamb's chambers, I was made still more proud and happy by his appearance at my own on such an errand, which my poverty, not my will, rendered abortive. After some pleasant chat on indifferent matters, he carelessly observed that he had a little bill for £150 falling due on the morrow, which he had forgotten till that morning, and desired the loan of the necessary amount for a few weeks. At first, in eager hopes of being thus able to oblige one whom I regarded with admiration akin to awe, I began to consider whether it was possible for me to raise such a sum; but alas! a moment's reflection sufficed to convince me that hope was vain, and I was obliged

with much confusion to assure my distinguished visitor how glad I should have been to serve him, but that I was only just starting as a special pleader, was obliged to write for magazines to help me on, and had not such a sum in the world. 'Oh dear,' said the philosopher, 'I thought you were a young gentleman of fortune,—don't mention it, don't mention it; I shall do very well elsewhere;' and then in the most gracious manner reverted to our former topics, and sat in my small room for half an hour as if to convince me that my want of fortune made no difference in his esteem."

Godwin's evenings were spent in playing whist at home or in Lamb's chambers at the Temple, receiving or making visits, or at one of the theatres, where he had free access. And every first night might find Godwin sitting sleepily back in his box unless roused to admiration by some unusual piece of acting, when he would thrust his huge head forward, rub his hands delightedly, and exclaim "Good, good!"

Many were the games of whist that the children witnessed through the half-open door, or stole in noiselessly like mice into the Skinner Street parlor to watch. Curiously and wonderingly did they regard the distinguished visitors, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, so ominously silent over their handful of cards, till the little intruders were marshalled off to bed by the ever-watchful Mrs. Godwin, who returned to keep impa-

tient guard while game succeeded game into the roseate hours of dawn. Silent, especially uncommunicative, was Godwin's after-dinner hour. It was his invariable custom to refresh himself with a nap at that time, and it is said that no amount of good company could keep him awake. Often at Lamb's chambers, strangers were amazed to see the massive, protruding head of the philosopher sink quietly to rest between his shoulders, and the author of "Political Justice" sleep as stupidly and profoundly as a child. He conversed but little among strangers, and his talk was of the simplest, most commonplace things. Very disappointing, this, to one who wished to hear the prophet in his inspired moments.

As Mary was a delicate child, she was occasionally sent into Scotland. Great must have been her delight to escape from the close atmosphere of London and the reproofs of her step-mother. To Fanny, with her gentle disposition, the life at home meant accommodating her own not strong will to that of Mrs. Godwin; to Mary it meant inward rebellion and repression of all her inclinations. Very little care was spent on the education of either of Godwin's daughters, Mrs. Godwin discouraging any but household acquirements for them. It was her own daughter Jane, afterwards known by the self-adopted name of Claire, who received all the accomplishments which the slender means could afford.

What wonder, then, that Mary rejoiced in her freedom from restraint, that she ran with outstretched arms and flying hair along the Scottish shore, that the rocks and waves at Broughty Ferry were her friends and companions, that the startled sea-birds and the old fishermen marvelled whether this swift-footed, light-haired being was sprite or woman! This child did not know that there, in her own little English isle, wandering about in the same restless, darting way, only among the haunts of men instead of in the free, salty winds of the Scottish coast, was a nature like her own, a mind which would understand her wild fancies,—yes, which also needed recognition.

One can see her with her light, supple figure, standing on the sea-washed, jagged rocks, her wind-swept hair, her beautiful gray eyes shaded by her hands, looking out towards the sea, her clothes fretted and tossed by the wind. What art thou looking for, thou wondrous child? Thy Shelley comes not from over the sea.

As the years increase, she whom they said was lovely from her birth grew more beautiful. At the age of fifteen she was of medium height, but so slender and willowy in figure as to appear tall. She had a remarkably fair skin and delicate features, a wide, calm brow, and light, waving hair. But her eyes gave expression and mobility and an ever-varying charm to her face. When she was animated or excited those

calm gray eyes turned dark brown and were lit up by an inward fire, her face was aglow, and her whole being partook of the awakening. An irresistible vivacity inspired her manners. At about this time Godwin received a letter from an unknown person, who, interested in the daughters of two such unusual people, was anxious to know how Mary Wollstonecraft's educational ideas had succeeded. One can see from the reply how much Godwin had changed, whether it was from the familiar contact of a mind less fine than his own, or from a careless acknowledgment of his duties, or from a growing acceptance of the prevailing modes of thought and education. In later years, after sorrow and separation had taught her to accommodate herself to his nature, rather than he to learn hers, Mary Godwin became tenderly attached to her father; but I doubt whether he had much intimate knowledge of his daughter when he wrote this letter :

" . . . Your inquiries relate principally to the two daughters of Mary Wollstonecraft. They are neither of them brought up with an exclusive attention to the system of their mother. I lost her in 1797, and in 1801 I married a second time. One among the motives which led me to chuse this was the feeling I had in myself of an incompetence for the education of daughters. The present Mrs. Godwin has great strength and activity of mind, but is not exclusively a follower of their mother; and indeed, having formed

a family establishment, without having a previous provision for the support of a family, neither Mrs. Godwin nor I have leisure enough for reducing novel theories of education to practice, while we both of us honestly endeavor, as far as our opportunities will permit, to improve the mind and characters of the younger branches of the family.

"Of the two persons to whom your inquiries relate, my own daughter is considerably superior in capacity to the one her mother had before. Fanny, the eldest, is of a quiet, modest, unshowy disposition, somewhat given to indolence, which is her greatest fault, but sober, observing, peculiarly clear and distinct in the faculty of memory, and disposed to exercise her own thoughts and follow her own judgment. Mary, my daughter, is the reverse of her in many particulars. She is singularly bold, somewhat imperious, and active of mind. Her desire of knowledge is great and her perseverance in everything she undertakes almost invincible. My own daughter is, I believe, very pretty. Fanny is by no means handsome, but in general prepossessing."

That Godwin was a beneficent, mellow old man, growing wise and learned in book lore, that he was an easily satisfied member of the family, leaving the education of his daughters to the wife whom he had married for that purpose, is probably true; but that he was the friend and the chosen companion of his

child, the close and affectionate observer of her character, and that he followed out the kind of care which he and her mother would tacitly have approved, is to be doubted.

Idealizing the memory of her mother, as she did afterward the memory of her Shelley, the child Mary was even less able to appreciate the virtues of the present Mrs. Godwin. There was no companionship between them, and the attitude of the two Mrs. Godwins was so essentially different that it would have taken a wiser head than the restless Mary's to have reconciled or found equal good in the two natures. Godwin himself never tried to meet the question. With Mary Wollstonecraft's death ended that intellectual life which they had had in common, and those peculiar ideas which they had shared together, and the child of that union, born under those influences, did not serve to keep alive those sensibilities and those ideas.

Living in a world of imagination, weaving her weird fancies into stories, loving study and poetry, she spent all her spare time in the long summer days with her book, beside her mother's grave, in St. Pancras churchyard. All her literary delights disapproved of by her step-mother, rebuked when seen with a book in her hand, and told that in the store-room were fitter occupation, how many, many times must the sensitive, high-spirited girl have gone to her mother's grave,



and, with tears in her heart, have prayed to that beautiful influence to understand and guide her. Mary Godwin felt that she was like her mother. And the rebukes about her reading, the reproach at her unhousewifely ways,—might not also the same fault have been found with Mary Wollstonecraft?

How distant, then, how isolated from the present Mrs. Godwin, how much nearer was she drawn to her own mother. If it was necessary to choose between the idea of good that Mrs. Godwin pointed out, and the ideal of good that Mary Wollstonecraft embodied, and she must choose, for the ideas were too opposite to reconcile, could she do else than cling to the memory of her mother?

Thus it was that she grew up and passed from childhood into girlhood. And thus it was that Shelley first saw her at the age of fifteen, a beautiful, restless girl, singular and gifted, but hardly more than the child which he considered her to be.

## CHAPTER II.

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY was born on the 4th of August, 1792, at Field Place, Sussex. He was the eldest son of Mr. Timothy Shelley. As this gentleman figures somewhat prominently in the latter part of Mary Shelley's life, it will be as well once for all to devote a few words to his character and disposition. If it were not for the extreme looseness of the expression, he might be dismissed with the remark that he was the conventional type of the commonplace English country gentleman.

To be somewhat more explicit, Sir Timothy, as he afterwards became, was a robust, self-assertive islander, of fair mind, well posted rather than cultured, not without a slight literary perception, but without the faintest literary faculty or appreciation, a practical householder and agriculturist. With his equals his conduct was a mixture of complaisance and unreasonableness; to his inferiors he was well-meaning but overbearing; to his superiors, subservient. In all relations of life he was limited, intolerant, and conservative.

With his son Percy he lacked all possible grounds of sympathy or understanding,—a condition of things of which Mary Shelley partook the fruits, and of which she bitterly reaped the harvest.

Sir Timothy, being such as has been said, married a lady of unusual beauty of face and person, of a mild disposition, of narrow mind, and of no decided character. From this union came seven children, Percy Bysshe being the eldest. Of the remaining, five were girls.

It was evidently not from his immediate progenitors that the poet derived his peculiar temperament and organization. If we look one generation back, we can discover at least the source of the family name Bysshe, and with it obtain a possible clew to certain family traits. Sir Timothy's father, and the grandfather of the poet, was Sir Bysshe Shelley. He was a character in his way, very unlike his son Timothy, being quite as eccentric as the latter was commonplace. He was still living when Mary Godwin accepted the hand and love of his namesake and grandson.

Sir Bysshe was a tall, handsome, clever old man, a baronet, and the founder of a family which received a further baronetcy and a peerage. A gentleman of the old school, tolerant, himself liberal and independent. He married in turn two English heiresses, with both of whom he eloped, and rumor whispers of an Ameri-

can wife antedating both of the English ones. As Shelley phrases it, his "grandfather behaved badly to three wives." It is also to be mentioned that two of the baronet's daughters eloped in marrying. For years before his death the old gentleman was not on good terms with his son Timothy, whom on occasions he would curse to his face. Between the old baronet and his grandson Percy there was neither sympathy nor aversion, rather mutual non-interference. At his death, in 1815, Sir Bysshe left his son Timothy one of the wealthiest heirs in England, three hundred thousand pounds sterling in the funds and rentals; twenty thousand pounds per annum being the estimate of his estates.

Such was the immediate ancestry of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The youthful Bysshe, as he was called, early went through the schooling of an English upper-class lad, passing to Eton in his fourteenth year, and there remaining until he went up to Oxford at the age of eighteen. But no ordinary boyhood was thus spent. Early a vigorous personality and a restless spirit, rebellious against the powers that be and institutions that are, showed itself,—at home against restraints and rules parental, at school against established usages, pre-eminently the fagging system, to which not for one moment would he submit. Early, too, the literary and poetic penchant developed, a strange faculty

of the imaginative order, verbal fluency, and the itch of writing. Numerous ridiculous romances, notably "Zastrossi" and "St. Irvynne," were produced, and even saw the light through a credulous and never-to-be-paid publisher. Also numberless poems, not now to be heard of. Early, too, atheistical tendencies—a certain innate inability to accept the Christian religion as anything more than a string of commingled fables and formulæ—developed and attached to him, never to be loosed, rather strengthening with his growth.

Many beautiful traits of heart and character developed in the growing boy,—great sincerity, earnestness, and enthusiasm, capability for warm friendship, and an intense, almost fierce, love of truth. He was a lad of generous impulses and unselfish, at least in motive,—a reservation necessary from the fact that a constitutional recklessness of himself extended to and included others, often entailing troubles to those nearest and dearest.

At Oxford the boy grew into the man, and there arose the Shelley that the world knows. Here, too, it was that the incident of the expulsion for atheism occurred. Not a thing to be wondered at on the one hand, nor to be greatly censured on the other. The arguments of Hume had to the young Shelley appeared so unanswerable that he, with the aid of his friend Hogg, had made an abstract of them, and had caused it to be printed, with the heading, "The Ne-

cessity for Atheism." This pamphlet, or thesis, he disseminated with a much too open hand. The alarming brochure coming to the knowledge of the board of college authorities, they summoned Shelley before them and questioned him as to his part in its authorship. Whatever he may have said, or refused to say, the practical fact remains that he was expelled because of his connection therewith, his father and all other good Britons regarding him with feelings which found vent in words both written and spoken.

"Queen Mab" belongs to the beginning of his Oxford life, the notes to which, in so far as they relate to the anti-Christian idea, are said to be taken from the famous "Necessity for Atheism." In one of these notes marriage is strongly condemned as subversive of all love and natural feeling, and a most vehement appeal is made for an overturning of so "degrading an institution." But "Queen Mab," though printed, was not published; it was, however, privately distributed. Nor did Shelley ever recant any of the views expressed in the notes.

Thus hurried out into the world, ill equipped, immature, his almost immediate act is to elope with Harriet Westbrook. This young girl was decidedly his inferior in social rank, and lacked in all respects the qualities of mind which characterized the young Shelley. He made her acquaintance in this wise. After his expulsion his father cut off his allowance, and his

sisters for a time supplied him from their own slender portions with such sums as they were able. Harriet Westbrook was the messenger who brought these sisterly remittances to Shelley. She was a handsome girl of a pink-and-white complexion and soft brown hair. Her father was a retired hotel keeper, late of the "Mount Street Coffee-House." Her mother was a nonentity. But her sister, Eliza, who came afterwards and lived with Shelley, was no nonentity; she proved a stubborn fact. She was twice Harriet's age, with dark eyes, stiff black hair, her form was angular and her face pock-marked.

Much of Shelley's boy love had been expended upon his cousin, Harriet Grove. Now she was about to marry,—a circumstance not without its influence, probably an exaggerated one, upon Shelley's conduct.

Harriet Westbrook was, as we know, attractive in appearance; she was more; she was, for a girl of sixteen, quite well instructed, one could scarcely say educated. She was a good deal of a reader; her temperament was cheerful, and her disposition of that negative, insensible sort which passes for amiable. Her family were by no means loth to see her receive the attentions of the grandson and heir prospective to a wealthy baronet.

Thus circumstances threw Harriet and Shelley together, and for a time the young man found interest in dazzling her with his speculations and advanced

ideas, to which she soon became a passive convert. Harriet's family were rigid Methodists; she appears, however, to have had no decided religious leanings. Enthusiastic love for her Shelley did not have, but she certainly possessed for him the attraction that a pretty young girl of sixteen has for a young fellow of nineteen; then pity and a certain heroic desire to protect her added the needed climax. After a few visits paid her at her father's house the young girl went back to school. A few letters from Harriet to Shelley telling of illness and of family unkindness, coercion, and incompatibility; finally, one throwing herself upon his protection, and offering to fly with him,—then the elopement.

Harriet could scarcely at first have aspired to be Shelley's wife, knowing as she did his aversion to marriage upon principle; so that the Scotch marriage may fairly be attributed to his sense of the chivalrous. That all of this was hasty, ill advised, and erratic, no one has ever denied; that Shelley was the main or responsible actor in the drama is in no sense true; fidelity to fact must deny to Harriet the posé of an injured and credulous innocent. Nor is there any reason why we should hesitate to recognize the nobility of Shelley's part. That it was prudent no one claims.

Once married the young couple secured lodgings in London, and entered upon an existence of poverty



and perpetual embarrassment. It would serve no purpose to enter into the details of Shelley's life during this period. It was simply miserable. Hard as it is to quench the animal spirits and the inborn optimism of a young and ardent nature, things so arranged themselves, or failed to be arranged, that all of Shelley's real and better nature slept, rarely waking to the light. Family feuds and bitterness, cramping poverty, restless, ill-directed energies, the visit to Ireland, impossible sorties against the ills of the world, pamphlets and dissertations for the most part of no permanent or even temporary value fill up this interval. The poetic sense lay dormant, imagination refused to act among such plethora of unpleasant realities.

Not least of these was Eliza Westbrook. Early she came and settled down upon the Shelleys, assumed control of the house, dominated the passive Harriet, doled out the slender stock of funds, and rendered Shelley's life even darker than it otherwise was, as the cuttlefish will ink even muddy water.

Slowly but surely there dawned upon Shelley's mind the certainty that his wife was not only a creature of different mould from himself, uninspiring, uncompanionable, but commonplace, almost unendurable to him.

Seeds such as these grow without watering. And yet the year 1814, the third of Shelley's married life, opens with an incident that looks the very reverse of

the separation about to follow. Shelley, in August, 1813, had come of age, and thereupon, March 24, 1814, he remarries Harriet, the ceremony being performed at St. Georges, Hanover Square. But though this second marriage established without doubt the legitimate claim of her son to the family estates, it in no way altered Harriet's position toward Shelley. The rift widened till they drifted apart altogether, Harriet returning to her father's house.

## CHAPTER III.

### UNION WITH SHELLEY.

IN 1811, Shelley, like so many other earnest young men, sought the friendship of Godwin, the writer of "Political Justice." To him in times of doubt and distrust men turned, as they did in days of old to the Delphian Oracle. Both by letter and personal communication Godwin was adviser and friend of many a tumultuous, headstrong youth. His sympathy was warm, his judgment good, his advice conscientious. Shelley kept up an active correspondence with him some months before they met in October, 1812. At that time Shelley and his family spent six weeks in London, and they were almost daily visitors in Skinner Street.

During the summer of 1813, Shelley was again in London for a short while, and at the time, or immediately after, Mary, who was not strong, went again to Scotland with her father's old friends, Mr. Baxter and his daughter. Dear indeed must have been those journeys to Dundee, those months spent at Broughty Ferry, with its familiar wild coast cliffs, so like the rugged scenes of the Lerici of after-days. She spent

the winter with her warm-hearted Scotch friends, who loved the child for the sake of the mother, to whom they had been tenderly attached.

It was after her return in the spring of 1814 that Shelley saw her again, and found that the gifted girl, who a few months before had impressed him as only a child, had now become the woman who was for him the all upon earth. How must she have grown in the few months in which she knew Shelley!

Nature makes no leaps, unless it be when she makes the child a woman. If love can make the bad good, the foolish wise, the coward brave, the selfish forgetful of self, the cruel humane, can it not make out of a gifted girl a woman of genius? From the moment that Mary Godwin came under the influence of Shelley, from the moment that she awoke to the sense of a living companionship, of a friendship with this radiant spirit,—she was receiving impressions, learning truths that outstripped all that she had ever gained. A month—two—were to her years of ordinary growth. And whether she loved him before her journey into Scotland, or whether it was when she returned to London in the spring and their acquaintance began to grow into friendship, from the first moment that she saw him she had begun to develop in mind and character with giant strides.

Long before either is conscious of it, there is some subtle influence at work drawing two souls together,

bringing to each heart the same needs, to each brain giving the same thoughts, coloring the two minds with the same impressions, teaching them the same truths, isolating these two beings by their very affinity from the world around them. After the divine laws, which work silently but surely, have been preparing these two hearts and brains, then consciousness awakes, and that union comes which is called love, and that which is the result of all those subtle causes is itself considered a cause. Is there not some prenatal influence which shapes two souls the one for the other? Do they not wander stumblingly through life till they meet? And by the grace of those inscrutable spiritual laws, at the first touch of the hand, the first encounter of ideas, the first searching look of the eyes, is not a divination of fellowship flashed in upon them?

Were not the years preparing Heloise and Abelard for one another? Was not nature in her silent way shaping Heloise to be the fit companion for the mightiest mind of the age? If love depends upon propinquity or chance, Leander had found some fair maid on his own side the Hellespont. Or instead of Dante burying his love for the beautiful Beatrice deep in his heart, only to release it in immortal song, could he not have contented himself with some other Florentine lady?

Was there none save the gentle Colonna to inspire

and subdue Michael Angelo? Why did Antony traverse so many miles of sea to find his fate in Egypt's queen? Was Athens so sparse of women that Pericles must bring his Aspasia from Miletus?

When Mary Godwin, in April, 1814, came back to her father's house in Skinner Street, she found Shelley established there as a constant visitor. In early spring Shelley had come up to London with his wife, and taken lodgings, the indefatigable Eliza still in attendance. Harriet spent much of her time with her Mount Street relatives; Shelley finding the little parlor in Skinner Street an oasis of delight after the wretchedness of his own home. Trelawny has left a picture of the meeting of Shelley and Mary Godwin in the Skinner Street study, gathered from remarks made to him in later years by Mary herself. In that little parlor over the shop Godwin sat one evening with the five children who composed his family. The philosopher was reading in a didactic manner to his daughter, who sat next him. All was hushed and quiet, when the door suddenly opened, and a tall, thin man, with radiant face and lustrous eyes, entered. Godwin introduced him to his daughter. Shelley flushed at seeing the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft, who was his ideal of womankind, and whose picture hung in the room. He began talking to Mary immediately, but Godwin soon interrupted with some criticisms on poetry, saying that prose was

Shelley's forte. Hereupon the poet launched forth upon the subject of poetry ; but Mary, who knew that her father had a contempt for all except dramatic poetry, turned the conversation to topics of the day in which they could all join, and then the talk became general. But Mrs. Godwin, who had taken in the whole scene with perceptive eyes, was not appeased. She, her children, had been completely overlooked. Not one word had been addressed to them, and her self-love was sorely wounded.

In the middle of June, Shelley left Harriet, who returned to her father's house. Though there was no form or word of separation, and though they both probably expected to live together again, both were aware of their entire unfitness for one another, and the discord could only grow more marked.

He gave promise of a brilliant future, but Shelley above all other men needed favorable influences under which to work, and his union with Harriet was a hindrance to all high intellectual achievement. He was brought into intimate contact with people and questions that produced nothing but irritation. His recent journey to Ireland for the purpose of giving moral and substantial aid to the unhappy people there had been entirely unsuccessful. His failure to make himself and his motives understood, where he had the burning desire to accomplish a moral and material good, the suspicious reception of his offers, and the

smiles of ridicule at his enthusiasm, all had in them, to the sensitive Shelley, elements of poignant grief.

To a mystic and poetic temperament, and singular clearness of mind, he united a profound and impassioned earnestness, integrity of purpose, a disinterested love of his fellows, an engrossing, though often blind, desire to better their condition. But he lacked purpose and was often controlled by enthusiasm and impulse.

He was regarded with animosity and harshness by his family, cast out from society by what was termed his atheism, having just escaped from the entanglement of a designing family in Wales who had attached themselves to his fortunes, fearing to trust new friends, sick at heart with himself and the world, it was thus that he now found Mary Godwin, at the time when human companionship was most needed, when he seemed farthest from finding it.

Mary Godwin had always heard him spoken of in the family as a high-minded soul, who had vague but beautiful ideals. Had not her own mother had those same illusive dreams? Had not she, like Shelley, had a burning desire to do good to her kind, and had she not also been looked on with disfavor and suspicion for her very adherence to truth?

Mary Godwin could bring an offering to Shelley of a mind full of understanding, a heart full of sympathy and repressed love. By her very parentage, and from



her life and thoughts, had she been formed to understand him. What wonder, as she poured out her impressions to him, as she revealed her own wide sympathy and intelligence, as she turned her appreciative and glowing eyes upon him, that Shelley felt the restful influence of this being? What was Mary Godwin's joy, when she discovered that the man whom she considered noblest and greatest, found delight in her companionship,—she yet a child! What queen had state more elevated, homage more sweet?

Then the child leaped into the woman, and if it was the child who loved Shelley, it was the woman who gave herself to him.

Godwin became displeased at Shelley's marked attentions to his daughter, and requested his visits to be less frequent. He did everything in his power to restore harmony between Harriet, who was then in London, and Shelley, and his journal records a talk with Mary and a letter to Shelley on the same day. Shelley, realizing the justice of the demand, and overwhelmed by the sense of his own civil obligations to Harriet, carried about with him the appearance of one distraught.

One eventful day in July, whether by chance or otherwise I know not, he found Mary Godwin, as was so oft her wont in the long summer days, beside her mother's grave, in St. Pancras churchyard. There it was, in that solemn and earnest place, in the presence

of all those ghostly dead, where all the idols and vanities of the world are laid low and only the truth remains, that Shelley poured out his soul to that woman : the story of his early life, his disappointments at school, his disagreements with his father, his unloved marriage, his aspirations, his hopes for the future, his love for her. And there it was, in that place the dearest and most familiar to her eyes, in that place where her restless heart had always come for sympathy and understanding, there under the guiding spirit of her mother, that Mary Godwin plighted her troth to Shelley.

On July 28, 1814, one of the hottest days that had been known in England for many years, the lovers secretly left London for Dover, accompanied by Jane Clairmont. They reached Dover too late for that day's packet, and after a cool bath in the sea, not wishing to wait another day, they resolved to make the sail across the channel in an open boat.

As the sun was setting on that hot July day, this strange trio embarked on that strangest of wedding journeys. The sailors promised them a fair run of two hours, and as they put out a gentle wind played lightly with the bright hair of the two lovers. The stars came out and it grew darker, the breeze died down, red and ominous over the horizon the moon hung low, and they lay for some time becalmed. Presently the sea became troubled, clouds obscured

the face of the moon, a gust of wind struck the sail, drove the bow of the boat into the water, and the waves rushed over the side; they were in imminent peril of being swamped, but the sailors succeeded in reefing the sail and getting the craft before the wind. Immediately the storm overtook them, the sea ran high, and the little boat tossed from side to side, the sky was lit up by flashes of light and the rain descended. In this plight they remained for hours. Mary was sea-sick and slept most of the time, waking up now and then to ask how far they were, and to receive always the same dismal answer, "Not quite half way."

Finally, finding that they could make no progress toward Calais, it was determined to try for Boulogne; but the wind changed, the boat was put about, and just as the sun was climbing out of the sea, wet and glowing from its bath, they descried through the mist the sails that lay at anchor in the harbor of Calais. Thence the travellers made for Paris, where they spent a week of such extreme weather that they were limited to a few journeys in the latter part of the afternoon, when the glare and the heat from the white pavements was more endurable.

On discovering their departure from London, Mrs. Godwin had followed them to Calais, principally to dissuade her daughter from continuing the journey with them. She was, however, unsuccessful, and re-

turned home. Shelley's journal gives an account of the hasty entrance into their room of the landlord of the hotel, "to say that a fat lady had arrived, who said that I had run away with her daughter."

After their stay at Paris, they set out to walk through France. Never were the requirements of a wedding journey more simple. With a donkey to carry the luggage, and Mary when she became tired,—with a few pieces of silver in Shelley's pocket,—this remnant of the romantic ages set out on its journey. But alas! the sun shone hot on their fair English faces, their feet were blistered, and the donkey groaned under the weight of the simple trousseau; the fair lady was obliged to walk, while her palfrey turned his long ears to catch the slightest breeze, or nibbled the sweet grass as he loitered by the way.

One can imagine this strange trio as at sundown they entered some little, rude village. One can see the villagers, their arms akimbo, all agog with curiosity, as the dusty travellers toiled up the long street to the inn, urging on the stupid little beast. Romantic enough must the trio have looked,—Shelley and Mary, with their fair hair blowing in the wind, their slight, willowy figures, their luminous, sparkling eyes,—of graver and more substantial build Jane Clairmont,—the poor, hopeless, sad-eyed little donkey, the only unhappy one of the group, complaining under his weight of clothing; eager and bustling the

hostess at the inn, as she saw them cross her friendly threshold for the night.

When they found that the little donkey was not sufficient for his burdens, Shelley parted with one of his silver pieces for a mule. Mounted on this beast, with the luggage behind her, Mary Godwin rode along the highway, Jane and Shelley trudging by her side. They travelled through the rudest little hamlets; sometimes they slept in an inn, as often in a barn. Shelley sprained his ankle, and then it became his turn to mount the mule. Astonishing as was the appearance of the procession of the luggage-laden donkey, how much more this arrangement,—Shelley mounted on the beast and the two women walking humbly by his side.

They soon sold the mule for a cart. Each time Shelley parted with one of his silver pieces. This time it was to hire a man with a mule, who agreed to carry them into Switzerland. So they jogged, the three of them, along with the luggage in this cart that Shelley had bought. Here too there was chagrin and disappointment, for one morning they awoke to find that the charioteer with his steed had gone on to a village in advance and left them their empty cart.

Finally, however, near the 1st of September, they reached Switzerland, only to find that, by starting immediately, Shelley had just money enough to carry them back to England. With regret they left Lucerne

at once. On reaching the Rhine they, in company with some other travellers, hired a boat and journeyed down the famous river. In true Shelleyan fashion, they chose the side where the rapids were swiftest, and were many times in danger. By the 13th of September they reached England.

## CHAPTER IV.

### LIFE IN ENGLAND—MARRIAGE.

THIS union with Shelley was the epoch in the life of Mary Godwin. It was an epoch also in Shelley's life, beside which his ill-advised marriage was an episode. To both of them it was the event from which all else dated. To Mary Godwin it was the beginning of life; to the poet an awakening to a new and more fervid existence. Upon the lives of two such beings, so rarely adapted to each other, it is scarcely possible to overestimate the beatific influences of a mutual passion so instant, so intense as this; of a love so spontaneous, so tender, so reasonable as theirs.

It is not possible to treat of Mrs. Shelley's life without giving due consideration to the step which she thus took in forming this union with Shelley. Various motives, chief of which is the difficulty of properly and wisely speaking, urge one to pass over it in silence, and after the approved custom of commentators to devote much time to the details of this strangest of wedding trips, and say nothing about the real union of the wedded pair: to spend pages upon the description of the child and woman, and to ignore that which made

the child a woman, and became the formative force of all her active life.

But if we are in earnest in our desire to present the character of Mrs. Shelley as it was, we must understand what were the motives and what the mental attitude which induced her to accept the love of Shelley, and enter into this memorable union with him,—she a maiden of sixteen, he a man already bound in the civil obligation of marriage to Harriet Westbrook.

So true is it that extremes meet, that almost any effect may be the result of causes diametrically opposite. Intense cold will burn like fire; the pulse quickens with joy and fear; Epicurus and the ascetics alike taught moderation. So the conduct of Mary Godwin, in thus disregarding the accepted conventions of civil law and society, may be attributed to motives the most opposite; to utter thoughtlessness, and to excess of thought,—to a blind self-gratification, and a nature broad in its altruistic humanity.

To the small mind each event in life has but one possible aspect,—that, namely, which happens to be visible through the narrow chink which is presented to the outer world. To such, what need to speak? Other minds there are that both see and think. Between these two types of mind there is ever total variance: the one, blind to its own limitations, cries out for the condemnation of all it cannot comprehend;



the other, the diviner mind, stooping, writes upon the sand until the outcry has echoed its own answer, then rising says, "Woman, neither do I condemn you." It is not for us either to approve or to condemn Mary Godwin in this matter. Her union with Shelley, in its personal and ethical aspect, concerns us not. We need to consider this union in so far only as it is a true index of her character. For that Mary Godwin naturally and simply accepted Shelley without shock or jar to her moral nature is one of the facts of her life. The girl who at sixteen calmly and trustingly joins her life with a man already bound under the social obligations of marriage, indicates a past ethical history as far out of the common as it is possible to imagine. It is in this retrospective aspect that this Shelley union chiefly interests us.

Of all the influences of Mary Godwin's pre-Shelleyan life the strongest were hereditary, and of these the most powerful came from her mother. Standing above all the women of her day, in the courage with which she had thrown off the limitations of authority in social and ethical matters, and in the force with which she contended for the right of individual judgment in each and every case, Mary Wollstonecraft became in her entire being, as she did in name, an expression of the paramount duty of personal judgment *de novo* in all those matters which society by its conventions thought it had settled. That upon the institution of

marriage she brought to bear the same emancipated reason, is as the essence of her history. In her fervent nature these ideas burned in her through life and became incorporated into the intellectual structure of her being. Such special notions, when they have taken possession of a parent life, are transmissible to offspring to a degree in excess of unacquired tendencies. Any faculty of mind or body, any special aptitude or function which by cultivation or encouragement has been acquired or been absorbed into the life of the parent will have this tendency to reappear in the offspring. This is a rule of heredity not confined to mankind. The trained pointer transmits to its litter an acquired sense of smell, and in a generation the whole of any stock can be changed by the transmission of acquired variations.

Had Mary Wollstonecraft been wedded to the most commonplace and orthodox man in England (and who so orthodox), there would have been strong grounds for the expectation that her child would, in some degree, reproduce those special mental tendencies of her illustrious mother. But when Mary Wollstonecraft united her life with William Godwin, an intellectual horoscope was cast for the offspring of that union. Such a doubling of special tendencies could have but the result of assuring their reappearance in the children of such a union. Never were two people better agreed upon any point than were Mary Wollstonecraft

and William Godwin upon the supreme duty of not permitting established social customs to bias individual judgment. What she had believed and felt, he had long since reasoned out and taught; her individual unwillingness to have private judgment supplanted by a public system of ethics, in him found a philosopher who had long contended that all systems of public morality but enervated private morals; that the only way to produce good in the individual was to develop it in him by familiar principles governing the laws of growth. He had taught that nothing is eventually to be found in our lives but what had grown within us.

The mind of Godwin had also been especially directed to the marriage relation, that *experimentum crucis* of all original thinkers. By his own road he had reached the same goal that Mary Wollstonecraft had by hers. He regarded the marriage tie as useless, if not positively injurious to the best interest of society. In this respect Godwin was the more radical of the two, for while she desired that marriage should be freed from its galling bonds and its obligations outlasting love and respect, he contended that it was wrong in principle, even when it did not gall; and that its true perpetuity should rest solely upon the continuance of mutual esteem. Indeed, regard for the social welfare of their offspring was the motive which induced these two people to so far abandon their high principles as to enter into the Holy Bonds:

so strongly were they to each other's knowledge committed to the sovereignty of individual over social judgment. So zealously had both in their own way "railed at the bond."

When now a child is born to William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, what would expectant science predicate of it, with greater certitude, than that the trammels of convention would trouble it but little, and that authority, to put it in subjection, would have to forge its bonds anew? The event fulfilled the prediction, and in Mary Godwin reappeared, with the peculiar strength which marks the doubling of special parental traits, the distinguishing qualities of both parents: chief of which was the inborn tendency to exercise an untrammelled reason, unabashed by, nay, even unconscious of, the presence of convention.

With these inherited influences Mary Godwin started in the morning of life; nor during its course was she ever placed in circumstances which would strongly tend to neutralize these views thus inherited. On the contrary, all that she could learn of her mother led her to cherish this independence as an essential attribute: all of her mother's writings, as they came in her way, imprinted upon her plastic brain the same text. And as little by little the history and events of her mother's life came to her, she could not but receive it as a familiar principle, that to exercise one's reason in all things was the holiest heritage of hu-

manity. Nor would it escape her mind that marriage was as proper a sphere as any other for the free exercise of human reason, thus liberated. While the vituperations freshly showered upon her mother's name, and almost upon her grave, would as powerfully as arguments cry out in her behalf, supplementing reason with sympathy.

Similarly her father's writings and his position in the world of letters, and among thinkers, gave the philosophy of that spirit of rationality which she had received as her birth-right and assimilated with her growth. His teachings and history, the atmosphere of much of his association, would not materially modify these potent influences.

To Mary Godwin, thus mothered, thus fathered, thus nurtured, comes Shelley, himself an earnest, fervid believer in the essential truths of the self-same faith.

Once met, each in the other recognizes all his needs, all that the fullest sense of fitness or the highest ideal of beauty could demand. She knows his pure, elevated nature, knew of his ill-assorted marriage, to which companionship had ever been wanting and from which even toleration had about fled. To her, looking at it with eye of reason, this marriage was simply a grievous error; it had been worked out to a demonstration before she came upon the scene. She could do Harriet Westbrook no harm. She could

bring to Shelley infinite blessing. She knew that he loved her, and that she alone could make him happy. She felt her ability to share his labors, to accompany even his spirit into its flights, to alternately stimulate and sustain him ; now to hold up his arms while the battle raged, and now rest him, when, with spirit returned to earth, he longed for no companionship but hers. Sympathy and judgment combined to press his suit.

Thus the stars in their courses warred for Shelley. In his behalf reason argued and love pleaded, an alliance all but invincible. Did she want a principle of action, she had inherited it ; did she need precept, she had her father's writings ; if precedent were lacking, her mother's life, the only one of influence to her, supplied it. As a present incentive to the decision, she had the eager, pleading Shelley, already her bosom's lord, whom she knew to be noble, generous, pure, and elevated, and whose fate and future were in her hands.

The decision must be made, and she must make it. On the one hand, Love, Reason, Happiness, and a life with Shelley ; on the other, a social custom, a name, to her a mere form, whose bones were marrowless,—a convention for which she had inherited dislike and acquired distrust.

Is it a thing to be marvelled at that on that day in July Mary Godwin unhesitatingly placed her hand in Shelley's and linked her fate with his ?

Godwin's irritation and annoyance at the flight of Shelley and his daughter were extreme, and for many months there was no intercourse between the two families. His views on the subject of marriage had not only become modified since the death of Mary Wollstonecraft, they were completely changed. He knew that the world would have the erroneous idea that his daughter's act had been in conformity with her education, and the mistake of such a belief made the sting none the less severe to his vain, sensitive nature.

It was now that Shelley's poetic genius began to ripen and take form. He found in Mary Godwin an ardent appreciator of his work, a sharer and encourager of his noblest aspirations, a wise and gifted companion, a loving friend. Now his brain began to conceive those imperishable poems. There might without be ignominy and reproach for him, but at his fireside the wrangles of the world were never heard; those luminous eyes shed ever their gentle light upon him.

Mary and he worked, studied, or played together; whatever the one did that also the other shared. They read prodigiously, always the same book,—never two; walking, boating, in the house, they had a book by them, either philosophy or poetry, logic or novel.

During the autumn of their return to England their means were most limited. Shelley was often so harassed by debts of his own and of Harriet's con-

traction that there were days together when he did not dare stay at home, but passed the time at the house of a friend, and Mary, when she wished to be with him, was obliged to go there and visit him. They lived in lodgings in London, and were almost alone in their solitude, for few of Shelley's friends came to visit him at this time. But the criticism of the outer world weighed little upon them. Mary gave but slight promise of the mental brilliancy that afterwards developed. She was still but a child, miniature in appearance, in thought, and expression, apt to be petulant when displeased, and it was only after her companionship with Shelley had awakened her latent powers that she began to show the grace and charm of conversation that so distinguished her after-years. But Shelley had felt the heart and tenderness concealed in this tightly-closed little bud, and knew that in the right sort of atmosphere it would blossom into a beautiful soul. She was singularly pale, and rather careless in her dress. But as she grew older and lovely in form, contact with the world taught her to make her raiment adorn her, simple even as it always was.

In the beginning of the year 1815, his grandfather dying, Shelley's father allowed him £1000 a year, as being the direct heir to the estate. A portion of this Shelley immediately reserved for Harriet, who was still with her father. Her relations to him were friendly in



the extreme, and he acted as her adviser and confidant for some time. There never was any outward appearance of discord between Mary or Harriet, nor does it appear that the latter ever evinced serious objection to Shelley's conduct; it is also stated that Harriet knew from Shelley of his intended elopement with Mary, and that the haste of their departure from England was lest the Godwins should prevent, not Harriet. Shelley was even anxious that Mary's and his home should be considered as Harriet's, but his lawyers convinced him of the inadvisability of this plan. In the spring of that year he and Mary lived at Bishopgateheath, near Windsor Forest, and Shelley, whom the doctors pronounced dying of consumption, spent much of the summer in the open air, he and Mary taking long excursions on the river. Miss Clairmont, who now found herself welcomed only as an occasional visitor in Skinner Street, spent most of her time with the Shelleys; and during the summer the poet, his friend Peacock, and Charles Clairmont, who also lived with them, journeyed in a wherry to the source of the Thames. Mary and the poet still kept up their reading—French, Greek, Latin, and Italian works. He wrote a few scattered poems, and at the end of the year produced "Alastor."

A nation at peace has no history, and there is little to tell of this first year, except that Shelley's spirits rose, that his health—which had long been fitful—

began to improve, and that under his broadening influence Mary Godwin's mind was maturing and developing.

On the 24th of January, 1816, their second child was born, the son William, who afterwards died in Rome. Their first child, a daughter, had lived only a few days.

The spring months were spent at Binfield, and in March, Godwin, who went on a visit to Bracknell, walked over from there to see his daughter. This call renewed the intercourse between the two families, and afterwards visits and letters followed.

In April the Shelleys, accompanied by Miss Clairmont, who attached herself to their fortunes, started for Geneva, where Byron was also to be established. On the 27th of May the poets first met, and they spent two weeks together in the Hotel de Sécheron, after which Byron took the Villa Diodati, on the borders of the lake, and Shelley occupied the Villa Mont Alégre just below, separated only from the lake by a small garden overgrown with trees. It had no carriage access, and a pathway through the gardens of the Diodati joined his villa to Lord Byron's. Here Shelley and Byron bought a boat and spent long days on the water, or wandered inland together. Mary, with her unerring insight, saw that Byron's influence over Shelley was untoward; it made him discontented and inactive, while, on the contrary, in Shelley's pres-

ence, Byron absorbed his elevated and earnest tone, and the latter's poetry of that period is wider in its sympathy, less intensely Byronic.

In the last of May, Mrs. Shelley writes of Geneva,—  
“We have not yet found out any very agreeable walks, but you know our attachment for water excursions. We have hired a boat, and every evening at about six o'clock we sail on the lake, which is delightful, whether we glide over a glassy surface or are speeded along by a strong wind. The waves of this lake never afflict me with that sickness that deprives me of all enjoyment in a sea-voyage; on the contrary, the tossing of the boat inspires me with unusual hilarity. Twilight here is of short duration, but we at present enjoy the benefit of an increasing moon, and seldom return until ten o'clock, when, as we approach the shore, we are saluted by the delightful scent of flowers and new-mown grass, and the chirp of the grasshoppers, and the song of the evening birds.

“We do not enter into society here, yet our time passes swiftly and delightfully. We read Latin and Italian during the heats of noon, and when the sun declines we walk in the garden of the hotel, looking at the rabbits, relieving fallen cockchafers, and watching the motions of a myriad of lizards who inhabit a southern wall of the garden. You know that we have just escaped from the gloom of winter and of London, and coming to this delightful spot during

this divine weather, I feel as happy as a new-fledged bird, and hardly care what twig I fly to, so that I may try my new-found wings. A more experienced bird may be more difficult in its choice of a bower; but in my present temper of mind, the budding flowers, the fresh grass of spring, and the happy creatures about me that live and enjoy these pleasures, are quite enough to afford me exquisite delight, even though clouds should shut out Mont Blanc from my sight. Adieu."

The famous "Monk" Lewis, renowned for his ghost stories, also joined them here. Kept in-doors much of the time by an unusually rainy season, this brilliant company entertained themselves by telling goblin tales. One imagines them seated around a table dimly lighted by the flickering, sputtering candles, listening to the weird tales of Lewis,—the gibbering, superstitious, half-insane Italian physician Polidori, whom Byron kept as body-guard to earthly ills, sitting in a chair drawn to some obscure corner of the room, far distant from the ghostly circle of conjurors. One can hear the swash of the waves not far off on the shores of the lake,—can hear the wind beat the leaves and vines against the latticed panes of the window, can see the candles one by one as they sputter and go out, see the eager eye, the quick breathing, the parted lips of Mary Godwin, the satirical smile of Lord Byron, the amused interest of Shelley, the cowed aspect of

the pompous little doctor away in the farthest end of the room.

The breathless attention of the others and the wrapt horror of the superstitious Italian but gives inspiration to the ghoulish Lewis, till at the end of the tale a peal of laughter relieves the strain, and the lights are restored and the wind ceases its beatings and the lake its frettings, and the little, disturbed, fussy doctor can draw his chair into the genial light and receive the comfort of his flesh-and-blood friends.

Impelled by their weird impressions, each of them agreed to write a goblin tale. Mary Godwin's "Frankenstein" and Polidori's "Vampire Bat" are the only ones that saw print, or indeed were ever finished.

It was while Shelley and Byron were off on a short excursion that Mary Godwin wrote this masterpiece of imagination. She was then only eighteen. Shelley was greatly gratified on his return to receive this proof of her literary ability, especially as it confirmed the belief that he entertained in her creative faculty. He first awakened this mind, and to him belongs the honor of first recognizing its possibilities.

Jane Clairmont and Lord Byron were much together at this time. Byron had met her in London some time before, when he was connected with the Drury Lane Theatre. She had gone to him to ask for some stage position, and it is probable that her handsome face had duly impressed his lordship. Although the

Shelleys did not know the intimacy of the friendship, and were troubled and annoyed on discovering it, when, after their return to England, the little Allegra was born, they bestowed every care they could on mother and child.

While they were still in Geneva, Shelley wrote to his friend, Thomas Love Peacock, to get him a house somewhere, whatever would be suitable, and lease it for fourteen or twenty-one years. Could anything be more purely Shelleyan? Peacock was to select his future home, move his furniture from Bishopgate, sell what he thought superfluous,—curtains, draperies, etc.,—make all the final arrangements. There was one condition only, that the house should be prettily situated, if possible, but Peacock was to make the tremendous decision. Either from wisdom or inability, he did not do it, but he aided his friend in the hunt after his return.

September found the Shelleys in England, and while the poet was looking for a house Mary sent him this charming little note to aid his search :

“In the choice of a residence, dear Shelley, pray do not be too quick, or attach yourself too much to one spot. A house with a lawn, near a river or lake, noble trees, or divine mountains,—that should be our little mouse-hole to retire to. But never mind this. Give me a garden, and I will thank my love for many favors. If you go to London you will perhaps try to

procure me a good Livy, for I wish very much to read it. I must be more industrious, especially in learning Latin, which I neglected shamefully last summer at intervals; and those periods of not reading at all put me back very far. Adieu. Love me tenderly, and think of me with affection whenever anything pleases you greatly."

A house was found at Great Marlow, a long, stuccoed building, pleasant and spacious, with a garden and summer-house attached, and meadows and woods just beyond. While the house was being prepared for them they stayed at Bath. It was here that they learned of the disaster of Fanny Imlay's death.

The report, which was due to Jane Clairmont, that she destroyed herself on account of her love for Shelley, has no truth in it. There is no explanation whatever of her strange death, nor did there appear to be any outward cause for it. Her life at home was not unhappy; it had none of the elements of discord in it that Mary Godwin's had had. Her gentle and lovable disposition made it easy for her to bear with Mrs. Godwin, and she was growing to be a trusted companion of her father. She was accustomed to write cheerful letters to Mary and the poet of all that interested her, often making light of the little household jarrings. In one of her letters she says that she "got on very well with mamma, whose merits she could see, though she could not really like her." She was how-

ever, marked by that tinge of melancholy which was inborn in the Wollstonecraft temperament, which even Mary Godwin inherited.

Shortly after their establishment at Marlow, just one month to a day after the death of Fanny Imlay, the dreadful intelligence reached Shelley that his wife, Harriet Westbrook, had drowned herself in the Serpentine. All the world acknowledges now that her distressing death was not attributable to Shelley, but to misfortunes over which he had no immediate control. Shelley's grief and horror at the catastrophe were sincere and poignant. With rare love and appreciation Mary Godwin recognized the effort which Shelley made to conceal from others his regrets and his pain, for Shelley always held himself responsible, not for Harriet's death, but for her social uprooting, her introduction into a circle of thought which she could not understand. He justly felt that although she it was who had taken the initiative in their fatal marriage, had his life never interrupted, or crossed hers, she would have passed tranquilly to old age, moved only by the joys and sorrows of a commonplace existence, agitated only by its questions.

At the end of this year, December 30, 1816, Shelley and Mary Godwin were married in St. Mildred's Church, Bread Street, only Mr. and Mrs. Godwin being present. And here follows a letter from Godwin to his brother, a simple countryman,



which makes the immortal Godwin responsible for statements which sound very like equivocations :

“ Feb. 21, 1817.

“DEAR BROTHER,—I have not written to you for a great while, but now I have a piece of news to tell you that will give you pleasure. I will not refuse myself the satisfaction of being the vehicle of that pleasure. I do not know whether you recollect the miscellaneous way in which my family is composed, but at least you perhaps remember that I have but two children of my own: a daughter of my late wife, and a son by my present. Were it not that you have a family of your own, and can see by them how little shrubs grow up into tall trees, you would hardly imagine that my boy, born the other day, is now fourteen, and that my daughter is between nineteen and twenty. The piece of news I have to tell you, however, is that I went to church with this tall girl, some little time ago, to be married. Her husband is the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, of Field Place, in the County of Sussex, Baronet, so that, according to the vulgar ideas of the world, she is well married, and I have great hopes the young man will make her a good husband. You will wonder, I dare say, how a girl without a penny of fortune should meet with so good a match. But such are the ups and downs of this world. For my part, I care but

little, comparatively, about wealth, so that it should be her destiny in life to be respectable, virtuous, and contented."

The winter after the marriage was spent at Marlow, where Shelley kept open house, living with the lavish hospitality of a country gentleman. The house contained many rooms, which were always filled with friends. Peacock, who had been one of the inducements for settling in Marlow, lived near him, and Hunt, Horace Smith, and his brother were frequent visitors. Shelley's generosity knew no limits, and although his personal wants were very few, he probably lived above his income. His household was always large,—three or four servants, beside the Swiss nurse for William.

In February, 1817, the little Allegra, the daughter of Lord Byron and Jane Clairmont, was born. The whole care of this child was willingly assumed by Mrs. Shelley until the time of their departure to Italy in 1818, when it was sent, at Byron's request, to him in Venice. Mrs. Shelley parted regretfully with the child, to whom she was tenderly attached; but no one knew better than she that Byron's protection was to be preferred to that of its mother. Much of the time at Marlow, as also in Italy, Jane Clairmont made her home with the Shelleys, but she was neither an agreeable member of the family nor a desired companion.

Now, as afterward in Italy, her connection with the Shelleys gave rise to malicious rumors, and by the concealed paternity of her child, which she exacted from them and which they generously helped her to maintain, the gravest imputations were laid at Shelley's feet.

The most cordial intercourse existed between the Hunts and themselves; it grew into an abiding friendship,—a friendship, alas! fatal to Shelley. Shelley had sought Hunt's acquaintance when the latter was confined in Surrey Gaol, and since his liberation and his residence in Lisson Grove, North, the communication between the two families had daily increased. Visits and badinage were equally exchanged. This little letter to Hunt is especially interesting in the earnest it gives of that brilliancy which Mrs. Shelley afterwards attained in letter writing. It is dated 5th March, 1817. Marlow, 1 o'clock.

"MY DEAR HUNT,—Although you mistook me in thinking that I wished you to write about politics in your letters to me,—as such a thought was, in fact, far from me,—yet I cannot help mentioning your last week's *Examiner*, as its boldness gave me extreme pleasure. I am very glad to find that you wrote the leading article, which I had doubted, as there was no significant hand. But though I speak of this, do not fear that you will be teased by me on these subjects

when we enjoy your company at Marlow. When there, you shall never be serious when you wish to be merry, and have as many nuts to crack as there are words in the petitions to Parliament for reform,—a tremendous promise.

“Have you never felt in your succession of nervous feelings one single disagreeable truism gain a painful possession of your mind and keep it for some months? A year ago, I remember, my private hours were all made better by reflections on the certainty of death; and now the flight of time has the same power over me. Everything passes and one is hardly conscious of enjoying the present before it becomes the past. I was reading the other day the letters of Gibbon. He entreats Lord Sheffield to come with all his family to visit him at Lausanne, and dwells on the pleasure that such a visit will occasion. There is a little gap in the date of his letters, and then he complains that his solitude is made more irksome by their having been there and departed. So will it be with us in a few months when you will all have left Marlow. But I will not indulge this gloomy feeling. The sun shines brightly, and we shall be very happy in our garden this summer.

“Affectionately yours,

“MARINA.”

little trips by water, either accompanied by friends or alone. Godwin and his wife were sometimes of the party, and in Godwin's diary is a note that on one occasion their talk was of "novels and perfectibility." Their reading was extensive: Greek, Latin, French, Italian. Shelley was writing the "Revolt of Islam," which he published at the end of the year, under the title of "Laon and Cythna." In the exquisite verses of dedication to this poem Shelley has paid to Mary the tenderest, the highest tribute that a man could pay to the woman he loved.

On September 3d, Mrs. Shelley's third child, Clara, was born. The physician lived some fifteen miles away, and his son remembers how Shelley used to appear all out of breath, sometimes riding, as often walking, never stopping to take more than a bowl of milk before he darted off again in his rapid fashion.

After Harriet's death, Shelley demanded the care of the children whom he had by her; but Harriet's father, Mr. Westbrook, denied his right on the ground of his radical and unsafe principles, and placed the matter in the hands of the law. Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, had decided against Shelley, and the children were given to the care of a clergyman, and £200 a year deducted from Shelley's income to maintain them. He was utterly overwhelmed by this blow, but neither his outraged feelings nor the rigor of the decree swayed the chancellor. Shelley's indignation found

slight expression in the dignified but scathing attack on Lord Eldon in the "Mask of Anarchy."

In the spring of 1818 the Shelleys decided to go to Italy. Various reasons are assigned for this step,—the delicacy of the poet's health, impaired by his constant visits to the poor, which Marlow had in great numbers, and the desire to convey the little Allegra to Byron. Mrs. Shelley says that it was from fear that a threat, uttered by the Lord Chancellor, to deprive Shelley of their two children, would be carried out. In March they started for Italy, going direct to Milan.

Shelley left England sick at heart, smarting from the recriminations and persecutions which ever dogged his heels,—torn with anguish at the loss of his children, tortured by physical pains. But close by his side, sharing in all his grief, Mary Shelley kept equal step with him in this leave-taking. And a true leave-taking it was, for Shelley never saw English land again. Six years after, with trembling steps, Mary returned alone; husband and children slept under Italian skies.

## CHAPTER V.

### ITALY.

THE Shelleys stayed a month at Milan and thence went to the Lake of Como and Leghorn. They met at Leghorn Mrs. Gisborne, the Mrs. Revely of former days. She was still the same woman of charming temperament, of cultivation, and wide sympathy. Though she had not seen Mary since her infancy, she had retained for her interest and affection. She was with them occasionally during their life in Italy, and a beautiful friendship existed between them.

From Leghorn the Shelleys went to the baths of Lucca, where they spent the summer. These letters to Mrs. Gisborne give an interesting picture of their life there :

“ June 15, 1818.

“ CASA BERTINI, BAGNI DI LUCCA.

“ MY DEAR MADAM,—It is strange, after having been in the habit of visiting you daily, to have no communication with you, and after having been accustomed for a month to the tumult of the Via Grande, to come to this quiet scene, where we have no sound except the rushing of the river in the valley below.

While at Leghorn I hardly heard the noise, but when I came here I felt the silence as a return to something very delightful from which I had been long absent. We live here in the midst of a beautiful scene, and I wish that I had the imagination and expression of a poet to describe it as it deserves, and to fill you all with an ardent desire to visit it. We are surrounded by mountains covered with thick chestnut woods. They are peaked and picturesque, and sometimes you see peeping above them the bare summit of a distant Apennine. Vines are cultivated at the foot of the mountains. The walks in the woods are delightful, for I like nothing so much as to be surrounded by the foliage of trees, only peeping now and then through the leafy screen on the scene about me. You can either walk by the side of the river or on commodious paths cut in the mountains, and for rambles the woods are intersected with narrow paths in every direction.

“Our house is small, but commodious and exceedingly clean, for it has just been painted and the furniture is new. We have a small garden, and at the end of it an arbor of laurel trees so thick that the sun does not penetrate it. Nor has my prediction followed us, that we should everywhere find it cool. Although not hot, the weather has been very pleasant. We see the fire-flies in an evening somewhat dimmed by the bright rays of the moon.



"And now I will say a few words of our domestic economy, albeit I am afraid the subject has tired you out of your wits more than once. Signor Chiappo we found perfectly useless. He would talk of nothing but himself, and recommended a person to cook our dinner for us at three pauls a day. So as it is, Paolo (whom we find exceedingly useful) cooks and manages for us, and a woman comes at one paul a day to do the dirty work. We live very comfortably, and if Paolo did not cheat us he would be a servant worth a treasure, for he does everything cleanly and exactly, without teasing us in any way. So we lead here a very quiet, pleasant life, reading our canto of Ariosto and walking in the evening among these delightful woods. We have but one wish (you know what that is), but you take no pity upon us, and exile us from your presence so long that I quite long to see you again. Now we see no one. The Signor Chiappo is a stupid fellow, and the Casino is not open that I know of,—at least it is not at all frequented. When it is, every kind of amusement goes on there, particularly dancing, which is divided into four parts,—English and French country dances, quadrilles, waltzes, and Italian dances. These take place twice a week, on which evening the ladies dress, but on others they go merely in a walking dress.

"We have found among our books a volume of poems of Lord Byron's, which you may not have

seen. Some of them I think you will like; but this will be a novelty to recommend us on our return. I begin to be very much delighted with Ariosto. The beginning of the nineteenth canto is particularly beautiful. It is the wounding of Medoro and his being relieved by Angelica, who, for a wonder, shows herself in light of a sympathizing and amiable person.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY."

Shelley himself, in a letter, makes a humorous allusion to the dancing. "They have a ball at the Casino here every Saturday," he writes, "which we attend; but neither Mary nor C—— dance. I do not know whether they refrain from philosophy or Protestantism."

The C—— mentioned in the following letter is Jane, or, as she preferred to be called, Claire Clairmont.

"BAGNI DI LUCCA, August 17, 1818.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—It gave me great pleasure to receive your letter, after so long a silence, when I had begun to conjecture a thousand reasons for it, and among others illness, in which I was half right. Indeed I am much concerned to hear of Mr. Revely's attacks, and sincerely hope that nothing will retard his speedy recovery. His illness gave me a slight hope that you will now be induced to come to the

baths, if it were even to try the effects of the hot baths. You would find the weather cool, for we already feel in this part of the world that the year is declining by the cold mornings and evenings. I have another selfish reason to wish that you would come, which I have a great mind not to mention. Yet I will not omit it, as it might induce you. Shelley and C—— are gone: they went to-day to Venice on important business; and I am left to take charge of the house. Now if all of you, or any of you, would come and cheer my solitude it would be exceedingly kind. I dare say you would find many of your friends here. Among the rest there is the Signora Felicho, whom I believe you knew at Pisa.

“Shelley and I have ridden almost every evening: C—— did the same at first; but she has been unlucky, and once fell from her horse and hurt her knee, so as to knock her up for some time. It is the fashion here for all the English to ride; and it is very pleasant on these fine evenings, when we set out at sunset and are lighted home by Venus, Jupiter, and Diana, who kindly give us their light after the sleepy Apollo is gone to bed. The road which we frequent is raised somewhat above and overlooks the river, affording some very fine points of view among these woody mountains.

“Still, we know no one: we speak to one or two people at the Casino, and that is all. We live in our

studious way, going on with Tasso, whom I like ; but now I have read more than half his poems, I do not know that I like so well as Ariosto. Shelley translated the 'Symposium' in ten days. It is a most beautiful piece of writing. I think you will be delighted with it. It is true that in many particulars it shocks our present manners ; but no one can be a reader of the works of antiquity unless they can transport themselves from these to other times, and judge not by our, but by their morality.

"Shelley is tolerably well in health ; the hot weather has done him good. We have been in high debate, nor have we come to any conclusion concerning the land or sea journey to Naples. We have been thinking that when we want to go, that although the equinox will be past, yet the equinoctial winds will hardly have spent themselves ; but I cannot express to you how I fear a storm at sea, with two such young children as William and Clara. Do you know the periods when the Mediterranean is troubled, and when the wintry halcyon days come ? However it may be, we shall see you before we proceed southward.

"We have been reading Eustace's 'Tour through Italy.' I do not wonder the Italians reprinted it. Among other select specimens of his way of thinking, he says that the Romans did not derive their arts and learning from the Greeks ; that Italian ladies are chaste,

and the lazzaroni honest and industrious; and that as to assassinations and highway robbery in Italy, it is all a calumny,—no such things were ever heard of. Italy was the Garden of Eden and all the Italians Adams and Eves, until the blasts of hell (*i.e.*, the French, for by that polite name he designates them) came. By the way, an Italian servant stabbed an English one here, it was thought dangerously at first, but the man is doing better. I have scribbled a long letter and I dare say you have long wished to be at the end of it. Well now you are. So my dear Mrs. Gisborne, with best remembrances,

“Yours, obliged and affectionately,

“MARY W. SHELLEY.”

During his absence from Mary at this time, Shelley sent her the affectionate letters from which these extracts are taken: “Well, my dearest Mary, are you very lonely? Tell me the truth, my sweetest, do you ever cry? I shall hear from you in Venice and once on my return here. If you love me you will keep up your spirits, and at all events tell me the truth about them, for I assure you I am not of a disposition to be flattered by your sorrow, though I should be by your cheerfulness, and above all by seeing such fruits of my absence as were produced when we were at Geneva. How is Willmouse, and little Clara? They must be kissed for me; and you must particularly remember

to speak my name to William, and see that he does not quite forget me before my return. Adieu, my dearest girl; I think we shall soon meet. I shall write again from Venice. Adieu, dear Mary."

But sweetest love letter of all is this fragment which was written at this time :

" O Mary dear, that you were here !  
With your brown eyes bright and clear—  
And your sweet voice like a bird  
Singing love to its lone mate  
In the ivy bower disconsolate,  
Voice the sweetest ever heard,—  
And your brow . . . .  
Than the . . . . sky  
Of this azure Italy.  
Mary dear come to me soon !  
I am not well whilst thou art far.  
As sunset to the spheroid moon,  
As twilight to the western star  
Thou, beloved, art to me.

" O Mary dear, that you were here !  
The castle-echo whispers ' Here ' ! "

Later on, from Venice, he writes for her to join him, planning out her trip for her. " I have been obliged to decide on all these things without you. I have done for the best ; and my own beloved Mary, you must soon come and scold me if I have done wrong, and kiss me if I have done right, for I am sure I do not know which, and only the event can show. We

shall at least be saved the trouble of introduction. I have formed the acquaintance of a lady, who is so good, so beautiful, so angelically mild, that were she wise like you she would be quite a—— Her eyes are like a reflection of yours; her manners are like yours when you know and like a person. Dearest love, be well, be happy, come to me. Confide in your own constant and affectionate P. B. S.

“ Kiss the blue-eyed darlings for me, and do not let William forget me: Clara cannot recollect me.”

Mary immediately joined Shelley in Venice. There Lord Byron had fixed his abode, and during the Shelleys' stay he placed at their disposal his villa at Este. The house was cheerful, and there was a vine-trellised walk to the little summer-house where the poet wrote. Mrs. Shelley speaks thus of it: “ A slight ravine with a road in its depth divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark, massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevasses owls and bats flitted forth by night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance.

While they were at Este their infant child, Clara, became ill from the heat. They hastened into Venice for medical aid, but the little creature died in their

arms as they entered the city. A few weeks longer were spent at Este, and then they proceeded southward, visiting Ferrara, Bologna, Rome, and in December they established themselves at Naples.

Mary and Shelley were quite alone, except for Miss Clairmont, during the winter, and Shelley suffered greatly in health. However, they took sunny trips on the bay, or wandered inland over the hills, once going up Vesuvius, Mary and he mounted on mules and Miss Clairmont on a chair carried by four natives; but Mrs. Shelley felt that their life was too solitary. She, even more than Shelley, needed the inspiring society of gifted friends; more than he, she needed their companionship and interest. Her solitary moments were too often tinged with melancholy, hers by inheritance, and which was increased by the recent loss of her child.

At the end of a letter to Mrs. Gisborne she tells how they were placed: "We are now settled in comfortable lodgings, which Shelley took for three louis a week, opposite the Royal Gardens: you no doubt remember the situation. We have a full view of the bay from our windows; so I think we are well off. As yet we have seen nothing, but we shall soon make some excursions into the environs."

In another place, she says of their life,—“We lived in utter solitude. And such is not the nurse of cheerfulness: for then, at least with those who have been



exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intensely; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness."

Early in the spring of 1819 they left Naples for Rome, which soon, however, became unendurable as the scene of their great sorrow. After a short illness, during which Shelley watched nights and days without rest, on the 7th day of June, their dearly-loved son, William, their only remaining child, died. He was buried in the English cemetery there, of which place Shelley wrote,—“This spot is the repository of a sacred loss of which the yearnings of a parent’s heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here.” Childless and grief stricken, they departed from Rome for the Villa Valsovano, near Leghorn.

A letter from Godwin to Mrs. Shelley at this time makes one shudder at the light in which a “father and philosopher” can regard one of the tenderest and most bereaving of sorrows:

“SKINNER ST., Sept. 9, 1819.

“MY DEAR MARY,—Your letter of August 19th is very grievous to me, inasmuch as you represent me as increasing the degree of your uneasiness and depression.

“You must, however, allow me the privilege of a

father and a philosopher in expostulating with you on this depression. I cannot but consider it as lowering your character in a memorable degree, and putting you quite among the commonality and mob of your sex, when I had thought I saw in you symptoms entitling you to be ranked among those noble spirits that do honor to our nature. What a falling off is here! How bitterly is so inglorious a change to be deplored! What is it you want that you have not? You have the husband of your choice, to whom you seem to be unalterably attached, a man of intellectual attainments, whatever I and some other persons may think of his morality" [one recalls Godwin's complainant letter to his simple country brother]; "and the defects under this last head, if they be not (as you seem to think) imaginary, at least do not operate as towards you. You have all the goods of fortune, all the means of being useful to others and shining in your proper sphere. But you have lost your child, and all the rest of the world, all that is beautiful, and all that has a claim upon your kindness, is nothing because a child of two years old is dead.

"The human species may be divided into two great classes: those who lean on others for support, and those who are qualified to support. Of these last, some have one, some five, and some ten talents. Some can support a husband, a child, a small but respectable circle of friends and dependents, and some

can support a world ; contributing by their energies to advance the whole species one or more degrees in the scale of perfectibility. The former class sit with arms crossed, a prey to apathy and languor, of no use to any earthly creature, and ready to fall from their stools if some kind soul, who might compassionate, but who cannot respect them, did not come from moment to moment and set them up again. You were formed by nature to belong to the best of these classes, but you seem to be shrinking away and voluntarily enrolling yourself among the worst.

“Above all things I entreat you, do not put the miserable delusion on yourself to think there is something fine and beautiful and delicate in giving yourself up and agreeing to be nothing.

“Remember, too, that though at first your nearest connections may pity you in this state, yet that, when they see you fixed in selfishness and ill-humor, and regardless of the happiness of every one else, they will finally cease to love you and scarcely learn to endure you. The other parts of your letter afford me much satisfaction. Depend upon it there is no maxim more true or more important than this. Frankness of communication takes off bitterness,—true philosophy invites all communication and withholds none.”

These were miserable days for the Shelleys. An intense melancholy hung over Mary, which doubly in-

creased Shelley's grief. Two little fragments he wrote during the summer speak of this time of sorrow :

"My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,  
And left me in this dreary world alone ?  
Thy form is here indeed,—a lovely one,—  
But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road  
That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode ;  
Thou sittest on the hearth of pale Despair, where  
For thine own sake I cannot follow thee."

"The world is dreary  
And I am weary  
Of wandering on without thee, Mary.  
A joy was ere while  
In thy voice and thy smile,  
And 'tis gone, where I should be gone too, Mary."

Of the Villa Valsovano, near Leghorn, Mrs. Shelley writes,—“ Our villa was situate in the midst of a *podere*. The peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows during the heats of a very hot summer, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on and the fire-flies flashed from among the myrtle hedges. Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.”

A little room at the top of the house (his tower, as he called it) was used by Shelley as a study, and the unabashed rays of the Italian sun beat down on his unmindful head. While they were here Mary urged

Shelley to use the material which at Rome he had collected about the "Cenci," for a drama. He had suggested that she should write one, believing that she, if either, possessed dramatic ability, and had already collected for her material for a drama of Charles I.

Their villa was just outside of Leghorn, where the Gisbornes had their home, and the companionship of this warm-hearted family was a great boon, both to Shelley and Mary, in their loneliness. It was to Mrs. Gisborne that Mrs. Shelley ever turned in need of sympathy. During the long summer days Shelley worked on the "Cenci" or took excursions by land or sea with Mary and the Gisbornes.

Mrs. Shelley thus writes to Mrs. Hunt from Leghorn on the 28th August, 1819:

"MY DEAR MARIANNE,—We are very dull at Leghorn, and I can therefore write nothing to amuse you. We live in a little country house at the end of a green lane surrounded by a *podere*. These *poderes* are just the things Hunt would like. They are like our kitchen gardens, with the difference only that the beautiful fertility of this country gives them. A large bed of cabbages is very unpicturesque in England, but here the furrows are alternated with rows of grapes festooned on their supporters. It is filled with olive, fig, and peach trees, and the hedges are of myrtle, which have just ceased to flower. Their flower has

the sweetest, faint smell in the world, like some delicious spice. Green, grassy walks lead you through the vines. The people are always busy, and it is pleasant to see three or four of them transform in one day a bed of Indian corn to one of celery. They work in this hot weather in their shirts, or smock frocks (but their breasts are bare), their brown legs nearly the color, only with a rich tinge of red in it, of the earth they turn up. They sing, not very melodiously, but very loud, Rossini's music, *Mi rivedrai ti rivedrò*, and they are accompanied by the *cicala*, a kind of little beetle, that makes a noise with its tail as loud as Johnny can sing. They live on trees, and three or four together are enough to deafen you. It is to the *cicala* that Anacreon has addressed an ode which they call 'To a Grasshopper' in the English translations.

"Well, here we live. I never am in good spirits,—often in very bad,—and Hunt's portrait has already seen me shed so many tears that if it had his heart as well as his eyes he would weep too in pity. But no more of this, or a tear will come now, and there is no use for that. . . .

"Shelley has written a good deal, and I have done very little since I have been in Italy. I have had so much to see and so many vexations independent of those which God has kindly sent to wear me from the world if I were too fond of it. S. has not had good

health by any means, and when getting better, fate has ever contrived something to pull him back. He never was better than the last month of his stay in Rome, except the last week; then he watched sixty miserable, death-like hours without closing his eyes, and you may think what good that did him. . . .

"I am very much obliged to you for all your kind offers and wishes. Hunt would do Shelley a great deal of good, but that we may not think of; his spirits are tolerably good. But you do not tell me how you get on, how Bessy is, and where she is. Remember me to her. Clare is learning thorough bass and singing. We pay four crowns a month for her master; lessons three times a week. Cheap work this, is it not? At Rome we paid three shillings a lesson, and the master stayed two hours. The one we have now is the best in Leghorn. I write in the morning, read Latin till two, when we dine. Then I read some English book and two cantos of Dante with Shelley. In the evenings our friends, the Gisbornes, come, so we are not perfectly alone. I like Mrs. Gisborne very much indeed, but her husband is most dreadfully dull, and as he is always with her we have not so much pleasure in her company as we otherwise would." . . .

Shelley also writes of their life to Peacock: "My employments are these,—I awaken usually at seven, read half an hour, then get up, breakfast, after break-

fast ascend my tower and write or read until two. Then we dine. After dinner I read Dante with Mary, gossip a little, eat grapes and figs, sometimes walk, though seldom, and at half-past five pay a visit to Mrs. Gisborne, who reads Spanish with me until near seven. We then come for Mary and then stroll about till supper time."

At the end of the summer they went to Florence, where, on November 12, 1819, a son was born, named Percy Florence. The next day Shelley wrote to Leigh Hunt: "Yesterday morning Mary brought me a little boy. She suffered but two hours' pain, and is now so well that it seems a wonder that she stays in bed. The babe is also quite well and has begun to suck. You may imagine that this is a great comfort to me amongst all my misfortunes, past, present, and to come.

"Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled, for we have spent—as you may imagine—a most miserable five months."

In a later letter to Leigh Hunt, Shelley says,—“We hear of a box arrived at Genoa, with books and clothes; it must be yours. Meanwhile the babe is wrapped in flannel petticoats, and we get on with him as we can. He is small, healthy, and pretty. Mary is recovering rapidly.”

Sometimes their packages and letters were a year in reaching them, their migratory life being thus a source of no small inconvenience to them.



Mrs. Shelley, in a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, writes December 1st: "The little boy is nearly three times as big as when he was born; he thrives well and cries little, and is now taking a right-down earnest sleep with all his heart in his shut eyes."

On December 28th she writes again to Mrs. Gisborne:

"I think of beginning to read again; study I cannot, for I have no books, and I may not call simple reading study, for papa is continually saying and writing that to read one book without others beside you, to which you may refer, is mere child's play; but I still hope now to get on with Latin and Spanish.

"Do you know that if you could borrow for us Rousseau's 'Emile' and Voltaire's 'Essai sur l'Esprit des Nations'—either or both—you would oblige us very much. Shelley has given up the idea of visiting Leghorn before the finishing of the steamboat. He is rather better the last two or three days, but he has suffered dreadfully lately from his side. His numerous weaknesses and ailments have left him, and settled all in his side alone, for he never, any other winter, suffered such constant pain there. It puts me in mind of the mountain of ills in the *Spectator*, where mankind exchange ills one with the other; then they all take up their own evils again as the most

bearable. I do not know whether this is Shelley's case.

“Affectionately Yours,

“M. W. SHELLEY.”

The climate of Florence did not agree with Shelley, and in January, 1820, they went to Pisa. And now, as the hour of Shelley's death approaches, and the time that Mary Shelley was yet to have the presence of her adored friend beside her, may be counted by months, their life together, the places of their abode, are regarded with interest almost akin to pain. The remainder of their life together was mostly spent here at Pisa or in its neighborhood. Shelley was better than ever before, and they were away from the intense heat which prevails in the south of Italy, and which they wished to avoid for the sake of their child. That consideration stayed their steps, else they who were such devoted travellers would have continued the nomadic life which they had led since their entrance into Italy.

Their life at Pisa was less solitary than it had been formerly; they had English and Italian friends about them. Shelley's health and spirits were steadily improving; his work became more satisfying; the power of his genius—among scholars—was universally acknowledged, and the bitter and unceasing anathemas which had been hurled at him with all the force of the

English temperament, and which had followed him and Mary to Italy, were becoming less persistent.

Their days were spent in walking, riding, and studying, or in seeing their friends. In the evening, as was his wont, Shelley read aloud, Plato, the Italian poets,—whatever interested them. Mrs. Shelley wrote to Mrs. Gisborne on the 24th of March of their “being very busy translating Spinoza. I write from his dictation, and we get on. By the by, I wish you would send me a volume of the encyclopedia that gives a system of short-hand, for I want to learn one without delay.” One marvels, among the numberless other interests and occupations of Mrs. Shelley’s life, to which she always seemed capable of adding one more, how she could find the time and the mind to master short-hand. But then one remembers the almost invincible perseverance in anything she undertook, of which Godwin wrote even when she was a child. Perhaps one motive for this desire to learn short-hand is the playful criticism which her husband makes upon her handwriting in a note to Mrs. Gisborne: “I wonder what makes Mary think her letters worth the trouble of opening, except, indeed, she conceives it a delight to decipher a difficult scrawl. She might as well have put as I will:

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“? ? ? ! ! !

“Yours, etc.”

In the latter part of the spring, while the Gisbornes were in England, the Shelleys spent a few weeks in their villa in the environs of Leghorn. The country was very lovely here, and one evening, during a walk with Mary among lanes bordered by myrtle hedges and lit by the fitful light of the fire-flies, the song of the skylark rose above them, inspiring Shelley with that exquisite ode, "To a Skylark." It was now a year since the death of their little son, whom they had loved so tenderly, and Mrs. Shelley wrote this letter to her friend in Rome, Miss Curran, the daughter of the celebrated Irish advocate :

"LEGHORN, June 20, 1820.

"MY DEAR MISS CURRAN,—It is a very long time since I heard from you, so that, if I did not know your dislike to writing, I should be afraid that something had happened, and that you were very ill. My heart during all this time was at Rome ; but I cannot conjecture when I shall be really there. Still a letter with the Roman postmark would be a pleasant thing ; how much more welcome if from you !

"I am afraid you find great difficulty in executing our unhappy commission. Shelley and I therefore are induced to entreat you to have the kindness to order a plain stone to be erected, to mark the spot, with merely his name and dates (William Shelley, born Jan. 24, 1816,—June 7, 1819). You would oblige us

more than I can express if you would take care that this should be done.

"Our little Percy is a thriving, forward child; but after what has happened, I own it appears to me a failing cloud,—all those hopes that we so earnestly dwell upon. How do you like the 'Cenci'? It sells, you must know, of which I am very glad. If I could hear of any one going to Rome I would send you some other books to amuse you, for we had a parcel from England the other day: but we are entirely out of the world. It will give me great pleasure to hear from you, to know when you leave Rome, and how your pictures increase. Be sure I do not forget your nice study and your kind hospitality. Your study, how can I forget when we have so valuable a specimen of it, that is dearer to me than I can well say.

"Shelley desires his kindest remembrances. I would give a very great deal to look upon the divine city from the Trinità di Monti. Is not my heart there?

"From papa I have not heard a very long time. Affairs seem going on there badly, but slower than a tortoise,—I hope not so surely towards their apparent end.

"Farewell! I entreat you to write.

"Yours, with affection,

"MARY W. SHELLEY.

"P.S.—I have heard your brother's life of your father much praised."

The little slab bearing the name of William Shelley had been, it was thought, correctly placed. But when, two years after, the grave was opened in order to place Shelley's ashes beside those of his child, the tomb was found to be that of an adult, and the position of the little child could not be found.

Speaking of the trials that they still encountered from malicious people, Mrs. Shelley in another letter to Miss Curran says,—“Do you know we lose many letters? having spies (not government ones) about us in plenty. They made a desperate push to do us a desperate mischief lately, but succeeded no further than to blacken us amongst the English; so if you receive a fresh batch (or green bag) of scandal against us, I assure you it will be a lie. Poor souls! we live innocently, as you well know; if we did not, ten to one we should not be so unfortunate.”

Fearing the effect of the severe heat upon their child, in August they left Leghorn for the baths of San Giuliano, a place at the foot of the mountains about four miles from Pisa. They were happily situated here, but were driven away by the incident which Mrs. Shelley records: “At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks and, breaking its bounds, the canal also overflowed. All this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The

rising waters filled the square of the baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford, and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the square."

They then took up their abode in Pisa, where they remained till their departure for Lerici. They were now surrounded by friends whom they loved,—the Williams, Medwin, and, in the latter part of 1821, Byron. Edward and Jane Williams were two delicate and beautiful beings. Captain Edward Elleker Williams had spent some years in the navy, and also in India, and was a man of charming disposition and great purity of mind and soul. He possessed not a little poetic appreciation, and was himself engaged in writing a play at the time of his death. Mrs. Shelley says of him "that no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless." Jane, his wife, was greatly beloved for the grace and beauty of her whole character. As Shelley and Williams found pleasures in common, so Mary and Jane Williams became close

companions; and after the return of Mary Shelley to England she counted it as one of her joys that Mrs. Williams lived near her, and that they might see one another frequently.

Williams shared Shelley's passion for boating, and the two spent many hours on the water together. They constructed a little boat out of pitched canvas, which the shallow water of the Arno would float. Shelley used to take Jane Williams and the children out in this little boat, and Mrs. Shelley writes,—“Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point, surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around.”

“We have seen a few more people than usual this winter,” writes Shelley, “and have made a very interesting acquaintance with a Greek prince, perfectly acquainted with ancient literature, and full of enthusiasm for the liberties and improvement of his country. Mary has been a Greek student for several months, and is reading *Antigone* with our turbaned friend, who in return is taught English.”

This same year the Shelleys became acquainted with the “noble and unfortunate Lady Emilia Viviani,” confined in a convent in Pisa by her father to await a distasteful marriage. Shelley, inspired by the beauty,



the refinement, and the misery of this lady, addressed to her that mystic rhapsody, "Epipsychidion." He visited her many times in her convent, and both Mary and he tried in every way to lighten her confinement by gifts of books and flowers.

This lady was subsequently married to the suitor, a man seven years older than her father, and with whom she had not one possible thought in common; and after dragging out a wretched existence for six years in the marshy atmosphere of the Maremma, with her father's permission she left her husband and returned to Pisa to die.

About this time whispers of thoughts and feelings felt by the one and not shared by the other come to us from the life of Mary and Shelley. One can see that the surface of that great and beautiful unity had been disturbed, though one does not doubt that the real fitness and the true love of their life remained the same. That Shelley was often deeply unhappy at this time, that there were days of moody unrest and months of melancholy depression, is true; for Mary Shelley, looking back to the time, writes that there was some anxiety on Shelley's mind which he concealed from her lest it should give her pain; and there are bitter and unhappy allusions in some of Shelley's letters and poems. It is not surprising that a man with so keen a sensibility, a nervous system so highly attuned, a nature so elevated, should have

been constantly brought face to face with cruel disappointments. It was inevitable that Shelley should never see his standard of good realized ; and though his allusions point to more personal pain than unfulfilled ideals, yet one cannot say that his life with Mary had discord in it, though that close and entire companionship of thought and occupation which had so distinguished their first years together was interrupted.

It was not surprising that Shelley's movements should be eccentric and untimed, nor that as Mary developed in mind and character from the mere child whom he had first known her ideas should differ from his. She was always broad and reasonable and beautiful, with never a narrow thought, and she loved Shelley with true passion. What then? That does not keep a woman from being impetuous, often exacting, any more than a gentle and unselfish nature keeps a man from causing pain and anxiety to those who love him. And Shelley gave Mary many, many cruel moments, not only in his hazardous sails and prolonged tramps, but in that mistaken tenderness which led him to conceal from her what affected his happiness.

During the summer they went again to the baths of San Guiliano, taking the little, pitched canvas boat with them. "Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off," writes Mrs. Shelley, "and we went to and fro to see them in our boat by the canal ; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though artificial, a full

and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface, at night the fire-flies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicada at noon-day kept up their hum, the aziola cooed in the quiet evening."

This charming little poem on the aziola Shelley wrote at that time :

" ' Do you not hear the Aziola cry ?

Methinks she must be nigh,'

Said Mary, as we sate

In dusk, ere the stars were lit, or candles brought.

And I, who thought

This Aziola was some tedious woman,

Asked, ' Who is Aziola ? ' How elate

I felt to know that it was nothing human,

No mockery of myself to *fear* and hate !

And Mary saw my soul,

And laughed and said, ' Disquiet yourself not,

'Tis nothing but a little *downy owl*.'

Sad Aziola ! many an eventide

Thy music I had heard

By wood and stream, meadow and mountain side,

And fields and marshes wide,—

Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,

The soul ever stirred ;

Unlike and far sweeter than they all.

Sad Aziola ! from that moment I

Loved thee and thy sad cry."

By the first of August they were back in Pisa again.

Life was becoming calmer for the Shelleys,—less nomadic. They were forming for themselves a circle of valued friends here in Italy, and they were attached to the neighborhood of Pisa. Shelley's health improved every year, and his poetry showed the beneficent influence of the more rational life,—it was less mystic, less metaphysical, more human. Now, as ever in their life together, Mrs. Shelley was his amanuensis. Of the fragmentary poem "Orpheus" there is no record except her transcript, at the end of the notes, to which she has humorously written,—“I await the descent of the flood, and then I endeavor to embank his words.”

But, as in the following extract from her journal, she says,—“All were well if it were permanent.” August 4th she writes,—“Shelley has gone to see Lord Byron at Ravenna. This is his (Shelley's) birthday: seven years are now gone. What changes! We now appear tranquil; yet who knows what wind—— But I will not prognosticate evil, we have had enough of it. When we arrived in Italy, I said, all is well if it were permanent. It was more passing than an Italian twilight. I now say the same: may it be a polar day—yet that too has an end.”

Even while she was writing evil report was finding them out, although the letters which follow tell little else than intense feeling of injustice at some calumny.

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“RAVENNA, Aug. 7.

“MY DEAREST MARY,—I arrived here last night at ten o'clock, and sat up talking with Lord Byron till five o'clock this morning. I then went to sleep and now awake at eleven, and having despatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until twelve, when the post departs, to you.

“Lord Byron has told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly, because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice for which I am at a loss to account. When I hear such things my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding-place where the countenance of man may never meet me more. . . . Imagine my despair of good; imagine how it is possible that one of so weak and sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men. *You* should write to the Hoppners\* a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe and know and can prove that it is false, stating the grounds and proofs of your belief. I need not dictate what you should say, nor I hope inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge which you only effectually *can* rebut.”

To which letter Mrs. Shelley immediately replied. The Elise was the Swiss maid whom the Shelleys had

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\* The English consul at Geneva.

had during their first trip to Geneva, when William was a baby, and who had been with them until her marriage to their dishonest servant, Paolo.

"MY DEAR SHELLEY,—Shocked beyond all measure as I was, I instantly wrote the enclosed. If the task be not too dreadful, pray copy it for me. I cannot.

"Read that part of your letter which contains the accusation. I tried, but I could not write it. I think I could as soon have died. I send also Elise's last letter. Enclose it or not, as you think best.

"I wrote to you with far different feelings last night, beloved friend. Our bark is indeed 'tempest tost;' but love me as you have ever done, and God preserve my child to me, and our enemies shall not be too much for us. Consider well if Florence be a fit residence for us. I love, I own, to face danger, but I would not be imprudent.

"Pray get my letter to Mrs. H. copied, for a thousand reasons. Adieu, dearest! Take care of yourself,—all yet is well. The shock for me is over, and now I despise the slander; but it must not pass uncontradicted. I sincerely thank Lord Byron for his kind unbelief.

"Affectionately yours,

M. W. S."

"Do not think me imprudent in mentioning C's

illness at Naples. It is well to meet facts. They are as cunning as wicked. I have read over my letter. It is written in haste, but it were as well that the first burst of feeling should be expressed. No letters."

Another letter from Shelley shows how keen the shaft had been :

" THURSDAY, RAVENNA.

"I have received your letter, with that to Mrs. Hoppner. I do not wonder, my dearest friend, that you should have been moved. I was at first, but speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of anything or anybody except our own consciousness amply merits, and day by day shall more receive from me. I have not re-copied your letter,—such a measure would destroy its authenticity,—but have given it to Lord Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners.

"People do not hesitate, it seems, to make themselves panders and accomplices to slander; for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from *me*. Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret, good or bad; but in openly confessing that he has not done so, he must observe a certain delicacy, and therefore wished to send the letter himself, and indeed this adds weight to your representations.

"Have you seen the article in the *Literary Gazette*

on me? They evidently allude to some story of this kind. However cautious the Hoppners have been in preventing the calumniated person from asserting his justification, you know too much of the world not to be certain that this was the utmost limit of their caution. So much for nothing. . . .

“My greatest comfort would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our children to a solitary island in the sea ; would build a boat and shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world. I would read no reviews, and talk with no authors. If I dared trust my imagination, it would tell me that there are one or two chosen companions beside yourself whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen. Where two or three are gathered together, the devil is among them ; and good far more than evil impulses, love far more than hatred, has been to me (except as you have been its object) the source of all sorts of mischief. So on this plan I would be *alone*, and would devote either to oblivion or to future generations the overflowings of a mind which, timely withdrawn from contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object. But this it does not appear that we shall do.

“The other side of the alternative (for a medium ought not to be adopted) is to form for ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible, in intellect or in feelings, and to connect ourselves with the interests of that society. Our roots never struck so



deeply as at Pisa, and the transplanted tree flourishes not. People who lead the lives which we led until winter are like a family of Wahabee Arabs pitching their tent in the middle of London. We must do one thing or the other,—for yourself,—for our child,—for our existence. The calumnies, the sources of which are probably deeper than we perceive, have ultimately for object the depriving us of means of security and subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to pretext, pretext to persecution, and persecution to the ban of fire and water. It is for this—and not because this or that fool, or the whole court of fools, curse and rail—that calumny is worth refuting or chastising.”

While Shelley was thus absent at Ravenna, Mary sent him her picture that her presence might be visibly with him, which Shelley thus acknowledges :

“RAVENNA, Aug. 15, 1821.

“MY DEAREST LOVE,—I accept your present of your picture, and wish you would get it prettily framed for me. I will wear for your sake upon my heart this image which is ever present to my mind. I have only two minutes to write. I am just setting off to see the Allegrina.\* The post is just setting off. I shall leave this place Thursday or Friday. You would forgive

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\* Allegra.

my longer stay if you knew the fight I had to make it so short. I need not say where my own feeling impels me. It still remains fixed that Lord Byron should come to Tuscany,—if possible to Pisa.

“Your faithful and affectionate

“SHELLEY.”

The Shelleys had intended to spend the winter in Florence with their friends, Horace Smith and his wife. Shelley made a journey to that city expressly to select a house for himself, and to look up a suitable one for the Williams. But Mrs. Smith fell ill and could not leave England, and so Mary and Shelley continued in their old quarters in the top story of the Tre Palazzi, where they had surrounded themselves with their books and flowers.

Meanwhile Mrs. Shelley had completed a novel which was afterward published under the name of “*Valperga*,” and of which Shelley writes to his own publisher, Mr. Ollier, this letter:

“PISA, September 25, 1821.

“DEAR SIR,—It will give me great pleasure if I can arrange the affair of Mrs. Shelley’s novel with you to her and your satisfaction. She has a specific purpose in the sum which she instructed me to require; and although this purpose could not be answered without ready money, yet I should find means to answer her

wishes in the point if you could make it convenient to pay one-third at Christmas, and give bills for the other two-thirds at twelve and eighteen months. It would give me peculiar satisfaction that you, rather than any other person, should be the publisher of this work: it is the product of no slight labor, and I flatter myself of no common talent. I doubt not it will give no less credit than it will receive from your names. I trust you know me too well to believe that my judgment deliberately given in testimony of the value of any production is influenced by motives of interest or partiality. . . . The novel consists, as I told you before, of three volumes, each at least equal to one of the 'Tales of my Landlord,' and they will very soon be ready to be sent. In case you should accept the present offer, I will make one observation which I consider of essential importance. It ought to be printed in half volumes at a time, and sent to the author for her last corrections by the post. It may be printed on thin paper like this letter, and the expense shall fall upon me. Lord Byron has his sent in this manner, and no person who has either fame to lose or money to win ought to publish in any other manner. I ought to tell you that the novel has not the smallest tincture of any peculiar theories in politics or religion."

she generously turned over to the relief of her father. Affairs in Skinner Street were badly off,—never worse,—and Godwin was begging aid, as he had done many times before, by solicitations and direct appeals. In a letter to Mrs. Gisborne she says of her novel, that she first formed the conception at Marlow, that it took a more definite shape at Naples, but the work was delayed many times; “it was a child of mighty slow growth.” She spent much labor to make herself familiar with the manners and customs of the times, reading and consulting many books.

In November, Byron, and Shelley’s cousin, Captain Medwin, came to Pisa for the winter, and shortly after John Edward Trelawny. One never thinks of Trelawny without a feeling of gratitude for his infinite kindness to Mrs. Shelley and the integrity and fine appreciation with which he recorded his personal life with the poet. He was a man of the world, a traveller of experience, a student of human nature. In her journal of January 19, 1822, Mrs. Shelley writes of him:

“Trelawny\* is extravagant,—partly natural and partly, perhaps, put on,—but it suits him well; and if his abrupt but not unpolished manners be assumed, they are nevertheless in unison with his Moorish face (for he looks Oriental, though not Asiatic), his dark

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\* Trelawny was at this time about twenty-eight years of age.

hair, his Herculean form. And then there is an air of extreme good-nature which pervades his whole countenance, especially when he smiles, which assures me his heart is good. He tells strange stories of himself,—horrific ones, so that they harrow one up; while, with his emphatic but unmodulated voice, his simple yet strong language, he portrays the most frightful situations. All these adventures took place between the age of thirteen and twenty. I believe them, now I see the man; and tired with the every-day sleepiness of human intercourse, I am glad to meet with one who, among other valuable qualities, has the rare merit of interesting my imagination."

Later on, in a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, dated February 9th, she says of him,—“Trelawny is a kind of half-Arab Englishman, whose life has been as changeful as Anastasius, and who recounts the adventures of his youth as eloquently and as well as the imagined Greek. He is clever: for his moral qualities I am yet in the dark. He is a strange web, which I am endeavoring to unravel. I would fain learn if generosity is united to impetuousness, nobility of spirit to his assumption of singularity and independence. He is six feet high; raven black hair, which curls thickly and shortly like a Moor's; dark gray, expressive eyes; overhanging brows; upturned lips, and a smile which expresses good-nature and kind-heartedness. His voice is monotonous, yet emphatic; and his language,

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as he relates the events of his life, energetic and simple. Whether the tale be one of blood and horror or of irresistible comedy, his company is delightful, for he excites me to think, and if any evil share the intercourse that time will unveil."

The solitary life that the Shelleys had led since their arrival into Italy seemed to be ended; the circle of friends gathered around them gave intellectual stimulus and satisfied the need of sympathy and interest which Mrs. Shelley always felt. Her sunny drawing-room in the Tre Palazzi, whose windows were always a-bloom with flowers, was the scene of many an animated conversation between the two poets. The room was often filled with English and Italian friends. Here Prince Mavrocordato played chess hour after hour with Shelley; here Captain Medwin and Captain Trelawny matched yarns about their army life, and Williams told tales of India and nautical adventures. Mrs. Shelley took earnest part in the conversation, and Shelley often translated the marvellous parts of Calderon's "*Magico Prodigioso*," or talked in his wrapt, introspective way of life, death, poetry, art, religion. Jane Williams played melodies on her guitar.

The Shelleys had sent to England for their books and pictures, and their rooms at the top of the lofty palace, overlooking the city and country, were home-like and fragrant with flowers. Shelley, looking into the future, prophesied that their life there would not

be short. In this intimate circle Shelley went by the name of Ariel, or the Snake. The latter name was given to him by Byron, who one evening reading a line from Faust, where Mephisto says, "Mine aunt, the renowned snake," exclaimed to Shelley,—“Then, you are her nephew.” Although Shelley wrote many of his most beautiful poems at this time,—“Ariel to Miranda, take” and others,—he felt, as ever in Byron’s presence, dissatisfied and discouraged about writing.

Shelley’s days now were full of interest and industry. He rose at six or seven, read some Greek author or German philosopher before breakfast, and then joined Williams in an all-day sail on the Arno in their little flat-bottomed boat. At sunset he returned, and the evening till midnight was spent in talk or reading. He saw Byron part of each day.

Meantime they looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the Hunts. Shelley felt that the addition of Leigh Hunt would complete the circle of friends, and most impatiently awaited him. In a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, in the latter part of December, Mrs. Shelley speaks of their expectation of the Hunts, who had started on their journey, but had been driven back by stress of weather.

“Since writing my last letter we have heard of the departure of Hunt, and now anxiously await his arrival. He will be more comfortable than he dreams of

now; for Lord Byron has furnished the pian terreno of his own house for him, so that (more lucky than the rest of the economical English who come here) he will find clean and spacious apartments with every comfort about him, and a climate,—such a climate! We dine in a room without a fire, with all the windows open; a tramontano reigns, which renders the sky clear, and the warm sun pours into our apartments. It is cold at night, but as yet not uncomfortably so; and it now verges towards Christmas-day. I am busy in arranging Hunt's rooms, since that task devolves upon me.

“Lord Byron is now living very sociably, giving dinners to his male acquaintance, and writing divinely. Perhaps by this time you have seen ‘Cain,’ and will agree with us in thinking it his finest production. Of some works one says,—one has thought of such things, though one could not have expressed them so well. It is not thus with ‘Cain.’ One has perhaps stood on the extreme verge of such ideas, and from the midst of the darkness which had surrounded us the voice of the poet now is heard telling a wondrous tale.

“Our friends in Greece are getting on famously. All the Morea is subdued, and much treasure was acquired with the capture of Tripoliza. Some cruelties have ensued; but the oppressor must in the end buy tyranny with blood,—such is the law of necessity. The young



Greek prince **you** saw at our house is made the head of the Provisional Government in Greece. He has sacrificed his **whole** fortune to his country, and heart and soul is bent upon her cause.

"You will be glad to hear that Shelley's health is much improved this winter. He is not quite well, but he is much better. The air of Pisa is so mild and delightful, and the exercise on horseback agrees with him particularly. Williams also is quite recovered. We think that we may probably spend next summer at La Spezzia ; at least I hope that we shall be near the sea.

"The clock strikes twelve. I have taken to sit up rather late this last month, and when all the world is in bed or asleep find a little of that solitude one cannot get in a town through the day. Yet daylight brings with it all the delights of a town residence, and all the delights of friendly and social intercourse,—few of the pains ; for my horizon is so contracted that it shuts out most of those.

"Most sincerely yours,

"MARY W. S."

Even though life seemed now so many hued to Mary and Shelley and ill fortune to have spent itself, Mary's trembling sensibility, which was due partly to temperament, partly to the sadness she had experienced, could **not** see brilliance and gayety without an undercurrent consciousness of its converse. Re-

turning from a ball the evening of February 7th, she writes in her journal,—“During a long, long evening in mixed society, how often do one’s sensations change; and swift as the west wind drives the shadows of clouds across the sunny hills or the waving corn, so swift do sentiments pass, painting, yet not disfiguring, the serenity of the mind. It is then that life seems to weigh itself, and hosts of imaginations and memories thrown into one scale make the other kick the beam. You remember what you have felt, what you have dreamt: yet you dwell on the shadowy side, and lost hopes and death (such as you have seen it) seem to cover all things with a funeral pall. The time that was, is, and will be, presses upon you, and, standing the centre of a moving circle, you ‘slide giddily as the world reels.’ You look to Heaven and would demand of the everlasting stars that the thoughts and passions which are your life may be as ever-living as they. You would demand of the blue empyrean that your mind might be as clear as it, and that the tears which gather in your eyes might be the shower that would drain from its profoundest depths the springs of weakness and sorrow. But a thousand swift, consuming lights supply the place of the eternal ones of Heaven. The enthusiast suppresses her tears, crushes her opening thoughts, and—all is changed. Some word, some look excites the lagging blood, laughter dances in the eyes, and the spirits rise proportionably high.

'The Queen is all for revels; her light heart,  
Unladen from the heaviness of state  
Bestows itself upon delightfulness.'

"Sometimes I awaken from my visionary monotony, and my thoughts flow, until, as it is exquisite pain to stop the flowing of the blood, so it is painful to check expression and make the overflowing mind return to its usual channel. I feel a kind of tenderness to those, whoever these may be (even though strangers), who awaken this strain and touch a chord so full of harmony and thrilling music."

Who could resist this glimpse of violets and soft spring weather that Mrs. Shelley pictures so charmingly in this letter of the 5th of March to Mrs. Hunt? Dreadful indeed had been the storms which the Hunts had encountered when they had been driven back into port. Mrs. Hunt, who was in wretched health, had been so ill on account of the terror and anxiety that, when their vessel had finally sailed, she was unable to be moved. "My dearest Marianne," writes Mrs. Shelley, "I hope this letter will find you quite well, recovering from your severe attack, and looking toward your haven—Italy—with best hopes. I do indeed believe that you will find a relief here from your many English cares, and that the winds which waft you will sing the requiem to all your ills. It was indeed unfortunate that you encountered such weather on the very threshold of your journey, and as

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howled through the long night, how often did I think of you! At length it seemed as if we should never, never meet; but I will not give way to such a presentiment. We enjoy here divine weather. The sun hot, too hot, with a freshness and clearness in the breeze that bears with it all the delights of spring. The hedges are budding, and you should see me and my friend, Mrs. Williams, poking about for violets by the sides of dry ditches, she being herself

‘A violet by a mossy stone  
Half hidden from the eye.’

“Yesterday a countryman, seeing our dilemma,—since the ditch was not quite dry,—insisted on gathering them for us, and when we resisted, saying that we had no ‘quattrini’ (*i.e.* farthings, being the generic name for all money), he indignantly exclaimed,—‘Oh! se lo faccio per interesse!’ How I wish you were with us in our rambles! Our good cavaliers flock together, and as they do not like *fetching a walk with the absurd womankind*, Jane (*i.e.* Mrs. Williams) and I are off together, and talk morality and pluck violets by the way. I look forward to many duets with this lady and Hunt. She has a very pretty voice, and a taste and ear for music which is almost miraculous. The harp is her favorite instrument, but we have none, and a very bad piano; however, as it is, we pass very pleasant evenings, though I can hardly bear to hear

her sing 'Donne l'amore;' it transports me so entirely back to your little parlor at Hampstead, and I see the piano, the book-case, the prints, the casts, and hear Mary's *far ha ha-a*."

In the autumn of the year Mary and Shelley had chanced to take an excursion to Spezzia, and Shelley was so enchanted with the place that he fixed on that to be their next summer abode. His love was always for the ocean. When Trelawny was added to the intimate circle, his delight in out-door exercise gave renewed vigor to their nautical excursions, and the plan of the fatal "Don Juan" was soon decided upon. It was on the 15th of January that the project was spoken of, and Mrs. Shelley writes of it,— "Thus on that night—one of gayety and thoughtlessness—Jane's and my miserable destiny was decided. We then said laughing to each other,— 'Our husbands decide without asking our consent, or having our concurrence; for, to tell you the truth, I hate this boat, though I say nothing.' Said Jane: 'So do I; but speaking would be useless, and only spoil their pleasure.' How well I remember that night! How short-sighted we are! And now that its anniversary is come and gone, methinks I cannot be the wretch I too truly am."

On March 7th Mrs. Shelley recounts to Mrs. Gisborne an amusing incident. "So," she writes, "H. is shocked that, for good neighborhood's sake, I

visited the *Piano di Sotto*. Let him reassure himself: instead of a weekly it was only a monthly visit. In fact, after going three times I stayed away. He preached against atheism, and—they said—against Shelley. As he invited me himself to come, this appeared to me very impertinent; so I wrote to him to ask him whether he intended any personal allusion. He denied the charge most entirely. This affair, as you may guess, among the English at Pisa, made a great noise. Gossip here is, of course, out of all bounds. Some people have given them something to talk about. I have seen little of it all; but that which I have seen makes me long most eagerly for some seagirt isle where, with Shelley, my babe, my books, and horses, we might give the rest to the winds. This we shall not have. For the present Shelley is entangled with Lord Byron, who is in a terrible fright lest he should desert him. We shall have boats and go somewhere on the sea-coast, where, I dare say, we shall spend our time agreeably enough." What, perhaps, was most alarming to the good gossips of Pisa was that this preaching against atheism took place in the lower floor of the same palace in which the Shelleys lived.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SHELLEY'S DEATH.

#### A DIRGE.\*

" This morn thy gallant bark  
Sailed on a sunny sea,  
'Tis noon, and tempests dark  
Have wrecked it on the lee.  
Ah wo ! Ah wo !

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\* We owe to Mr. Forman the preservation of the earlier form of this little poem as it appeared in *The Keepsake* of 1831.

#### A DIRGE.

" This morn thy gallant bark, love,  
Sailed on a sunny sea,  
'Tis noon, and tempests dark, love,  
Have wrecked it on the lee.  
Ah woe ! Ah woe ! Ah woe !  
By spirits of the deep  
He's cradled on the billow,  
To his unawaking sleep.  
" Thou liest upon the shore, love,  
Beside the swelling surge  
But sea-nymphs evermore, love,  
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.  
O come ! O come ! O come !  
Ye spirits of the deep,  
While near his sea-weed pillow  
My lonely watch I keep.

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By spirits of the deep  
Thou 'rt cradled on the billow,  
To thy eternal sleep.

"Thou sleep'st upon the shore  
Beside the knelling surge,  
And sea-nymphs evermore  
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.  
They come! They come,  
The spirits of the deep,  
While near thy sea-weed pillow  
My lonely watch I keep.

"From far across the sea  
I hear a loud lament,  
By echo's voice for thee  
From ocean's caverns sent.  
O list! O list!  
The spirits of the deep,  
They raise a wail of sorrow  
While I forever weep."

—MARY W. SHELLEY.

The last of April the Shelleys and the Williams hurriedly left Pisa for Spezzia, taking their Lares and Penates with them. Shelley had learned of the death

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"From far across the sea, love,  
I hear a loud lament,  
By Echo's voice for thee, love,  
From ocean's caverns sent.  
O list! O list! O list!  
The spirits of the deep,—  
Loud sounds their wail of sorrow  
While I forever weep."



of the little Allegra in the convent at Venice, and he was in great trepidation lest before they could get Miss Clairmont away from Pisa she should hear of the death of her daughter. For since the removal of Allegra to the convent, Miss Clairmont had felt so furious a hatred toward Byron that she had declared that if anything ever happened to the child she would plunge a dagger into him. The Shelleys, knowing well the violence of her temper, dared not breathe the intelligence to her while still in Pisa. Indeed, so uncontrollable was her disposition that there had been times during the Shelleys' life in England when they were unable to live peaceably with her in the house, and Shelley had seen that she was provided for elsewhere. It was for these reasons that Shelley so hurriedly left for Spezzia, even before they had arranged for a house.

Possibly but for this Shelley had not gone there, and so escaped that awful end.

Williams's diary tells with faithful accuracy the detail of those days and the humorous consequences of their hurry :

"April 23. Left Pisa for Spezzia with C. and Jane.

"A— 25. Return to Pisa. Meet S. his face bespoke his feelings. C's child was dead, and he had the office to break it to her, or rather not to do so; but fearful of the news reaching her ears, to remove her instantly from this place.

"April 26th. Mary, C. and Trelawny, depart for Spezzia. Poor C. quite unconscious of the burthen on her friends minds.

"April 27. Shelley, Jane and I, nurse and children leave for Pietra Santa.

"Sunday, April 28th. Fine. Arrive at Lerici at 1 o'clock—the harbor-master called. Not a house to be had. On our telling him we had brought our furniture, his face lengthened considerably, for he informed us that the dogana would amount to 300*l.* English at least. Dined, and resolved on sending our things back without unlading—in fact, found ourselves in a devil of a mess. S wrote to Mary whom we heard was at Spezzia.

"Wed. May 1st. Cloudy, with rain. Came to Casa Magni after breakfast; the Shelleys have contrived to give us rooms. Without them, heaven knows what we should have done. Employed all day putting the things away. All comfortably settled by four. Passed the evening in talking over our folly and our troubles."

The mention of the last place of Shelley's stay here upon earth brings with it quick and vivid associations of his death. He was never more buoyant than during the few weeks he spent on the shores of this wild and romantic bay, but Mrs. Shelley says that a subtle and mystic intimation of brooding evil hung over her like a cloud.

The scenery of Lerici was grand but forbidding.

Their rude house, which contained only four small living rooms and a large saloon with one chimney for cooking, was placed on the very border of the sea, and under the shadow of a rocky hill that rose steep and menacing behind. The wind beat itself against the sides of the rocks and moaned incessantly; the tideless sea frothed at their feet and tossed the spray even into the face of their house; and during the storms and gales the land-locked bay was outlined by a border of white foam. The sky was always of the intensest blue.

The place was only accessible by a narrow, ribbon-like path over the hills toward the village of Lerici, where they had to go for all their provisions, and down which the natives—wilder even than the country—proceeded to the sea-shore, howling their incantations.

On the 12th of May the fatal boat, expected with such eagerness, arrived, and was immediately tried by Shelley and Williams. They pronounced her perfect. But Trelawny warned them that the open sea would be very different sailing from the calm waters of the bay. To the two inexperienced and enthusiastic sailors there seemed no flaw in the boat's construction, although Captain Roberts, the builder, had protested against the model. Shelley and Williams now spent most of their time on the water, making several trips to Massa.

Here, in this wild retreat of nature, one gets a last glimpse of those five friends before that tragic separation,—Shelley and Williams, about to explore the mystery of death, which the former ever regarded with eager interest; the two women, heart-stricken, still to live on; Trelawny, to stop long enough to perform tenderly and courageously every service that the highest friendship could bestow, and then to resume his nomadic life.

The Villa Magni, overhanging that bay which, with all its wild beauty and glowing Italian sunshine, had already a shadow of the coming calamity, was but a cheerless resting-place.

Often, on nights when the moon shed its fitful light through ragged clouds, the Williams, Trelawny, and the Shelleys, seated on the balcony which overhung the beating waves, and was the one luxury of that rude and boat-like house, listened to the wild chants and incantations of the natives as they wound down that path and filed in weird procession and dance up and down the shore, beating their breasts to the time of the waves and tossing their hair free to the wind. Often had the friends watched the uncanny troupe as it wound over the rocks and into hiding underbrush, impatient to see the last blue frock vanish and hear the last yell die away, that Jane Williams might take up her guitar and begin again the strain interrupted by the barbaric mysteries.

We are indebted to Trelawny for the most careful and appreciative record of the Shelleys' life at this time. He has made us familiar with their aquatic pleasures, their friendship with the Williams, their Bohemian life at Lerici, their daily occupations. He has given us, perhaps, the truest picture of Shelley and Byron that exists. His unfailing kindness to Mary Shelley in her time of need, his generous aid when others plagued and distressed her, makes us deplore the tone of criticism in which his latest record is made, belying the letters and expressions of friendship to her during those years of trial. Thankful are we that it was only to her memory that he was unjust and harsh, and that these later reminiscences were not offered to the world until she was mercifully deaf to the voice whose accents of friendship had grown crabbed and narrow with age. He says, and perhaps with some truth, that she was jealous and exacting; for much of the time that Trelawny saw Mrs. Shelley she was ill, nervous, and irritable. The whole stay at Lerici was one of misery to her; and, exacting as she was, she was also a very unhappy woman there. Unreasoning and emotional, most of it, certainly, but none the less sad.

The only atmosphere in which Mary Shelley could be happy and make the happiness of those about her was in that perfect and instant communion of spirit that had first drawn her and Shelley together. Some-

thing had interrupted that,—satiety, that awful Nemesis of love, perchance. The friendship, the affectionate consideration, the unselfish thoughts, the gentle reasonableness of Shelley's love still were hers; but the ardor, the esprit, the essence had died away. Adoring him always, jealous for his enthusiasm and tenderness, it was thus that she often, irritable and unreasonable, failed from her very longing to reawake that tenderness which she so craved.

Richard Garnet, speaking of the same question,—and it is a question that presents itself to each one who would speak fairly of the Shelleys' life at that time,—says, referring to Shelley: "Unquestionably however the real cause of the imperfection of sympathy, consisted in the impossibility of assuaging the cravings of an imagination perpetually outstripping all human conditions."

Thornton Hunt, knowing Mrs. Shelley, friend and affectionate observer of her character, thus writes: "I have heard her accused of over-anxiety to be admired; and something of the sort was discernible in society; it was a weakness as venial as it was superficial. Away from society she was as truthful and simple a woman as I have ever met—was as faithful a friend as the world has produced—using that unreserved directness toward those whom she regarded with affection, which is the very crowning glory of friendly intercourse. I suspect that these qualities

came out in their greatest force after her calamity; for many things which she said in her regret, and passages in Shelley's own poetry, make me doubt whether little habits of temper, and possibly of a refined and exacting coquettishness, had not prevented him from acquiring so full a knowledge of her, as she had of him. This was natural for many reasons and especially for two. Shelley had not the opportunity of retrospectively studying her character, and his mind was by nature more constructed than hers to be pre-occupied. If the reader desires a portrait of Mary, he has one in the well-known antique bust sometimes called 'Isis,' and sometimes Clytie; a woman's head and shoulders, rising from a lotus-flower. It is most probably the portrait of a Roman lady, it is in some degree more elongated and 'classic' than Mary; but on the other hand it falls short of her, for it gives no idea of her tall and intellectual forehead, nor has it any trace of the bright, animating, and sweet expression that so often lighted up her face."

It seems now in place that I should quote a portion of a letter received from Lady Shelley, the wife of Sir Percy Florence Shelley, and surely no higher tribute than this could be paid to Mrs. Shelley's memory: "I knew her myself better than any one, unless it was her husband or her son, for we never parted from the day of my marriage till that of her death—

nearly three years of daily and hourly intercourse, where there was no reserve—

“She was the most tender gentle and noble woman who ever trod this earth—lovely in mind and person—with wondrous intellect, yet retiring, shy and extremely quiet. Yet when a subject interested or moved her she would speak with a flow of eloquence. I believe that no thought of self ever occurred to her. I have no words to say how dear and sacred her memory is to me, nor how great a privilege it has been, to know one so true and pure and good.”

Trelawny himself acknowledged that wondrous eloquence the first time he saw her: “At the time I am speaking of,” he writes, “Mrs. Shelley was twenty-four. Such a rare pedigree of genius was enough to interest me in her irrespective of her own merits as an authoress. The most striking feature in her face was her calm gray eyes; she was rather under the English standard of woman's height, very fair and light haired, witty social, and animated in the society of friends, though mournful in solitude; like Shelley though in a minor degree she had the power of expressing her thoughts in varied and appropriate words derived from familiarity with the works of our vigorous old writers. Neither of them used obsolete or foreign words. This command of our language struck me the more, as contrasted with the scanty vocabulary used by ladies of society, in which a score of poor



hackneyed phrases suffice to express all that is felt or considered proper to reveal."

In June Leigh Hunt landed in Italy, and Shelley, impatient to see him, on the first of July sailed with Williams, in the yacht, to Leghorn. Mrs. Shelley was to have gone with them, but was too ill to leave her room. The presentiment of evil which had hung over her during their stay at Lerici amounted to terror at the hour of Shelley's departure. Still she let him go. The run of fifty miles to Leghorn was made in about seven hours. From there, Shelley took the Hunts up to Pisa, where he had furnished some apartments for them in Lord Byron's house.

Byron had conceived the idea of starting a magazine by the aid of Hunt, to be called the "Liberal," and for that purpose had invited him to Italy. How shabbily he afterwards acted to him is well known. After seeing the Hunts established in their new abode, Shelley and Williams, in compliance with a most foreboding letter from Mary, hastily started for home.

Trelawny has told vividly the story of their departure and of that fatal storm of twenty minutes. How Shelley and Williams, with their one sailor lad, set out gleefully from Leghorn,—Williams, who had been waiting so impatiently for Shelley to complete his arrangements so that he might hurry back to the wife whom he tenderly loved; how the little boat had got out some distance from land, when black,

jagged clouds were seen rising from the southwest, the atmosphere grew intensely hot and oppressive, the sea looked solid, the wind rose in short, fitful gusts, and the vessels in the harbor were all in anxious movement. The storm burst upon the sea in a fury of rain and wind and lightning; it lasted about twenty minutes. When it was passed, Captain Roberts, who was watching Shelley's boat with a glass from the light-house at Leghorn, looked for the little vessel, and behold it had vanished.

The worst was not known for some time, although Trelawny, fearing the truth, immediately began making inquiry of the vessels that came in.

Meanwhile the two women, apprehensive, waited on the shore of that wild and inaccessible bay. Mrs. Shelley thus writes of those days: "A sort of spell surrounded us, and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger. The spell snapped, it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root, even as they were more baseless—were changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore."

Mrs. Shelley's awful despair, her wanderings up and down that sea, which she says by its restless moaning seemed to desire to tell them what they would not

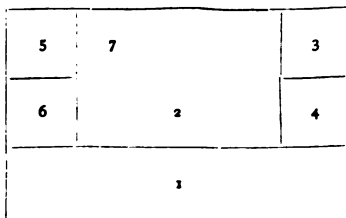
learn ; her calling aloud to the disseminating winds the name of her Shelley ; her journey to Pisa, while scarce able to walk ; her passionate appeal to Lord Byron to tell her where her husband was ; her refusal to be consoled, are only to be described in her own words.

Trelawny did everything that wisdom and friendship could suggest for the solace and aid of the two women. He it was who scoured the coast for miles up and down, searching for the bodies ; and when, after many days, the sea tossed them upon the beach, it was he who buried them in the sands and then rode over to tell the two women that the slender hope which they cherished, that Shelley and Williams might have been picked up by an out-bound vessel, was ended. It was he who persuaded the authorities to mitigate somewhat the severities of their quarantine laws. He helped to erect the funeral pyres, poured frankincense and myrrh over the bodies, saw that the spirit of all that Shelley would have desired was fulfilled, and when the body was half consumed, with his own hand snatched the heart from the burning mass.

This letter to Mrs. Gisborne, which is given here a little out of date, tells with tragic quietude, as of one stunned and dumb with pain, the most faithful account of their life at Lerici and of Shelley's last days :

"I said in a letter to Peacock, my dear Mrs. Gisborne, that I would send you some accounts of the last miserable months of my disastrous life. From day to day I have put this off, but I will now endeavor to fulfill my design. The scene of my existence is closed and though there be no pleasure in retracing the scenes that have preceded the events which has crushed my hopes, yet there seems to be a necessity in doing so, and I obey the impulse that urges me. I wrote to you either at the end of May, or at the beginning of June. I described to you the place we were living in ;—our desolate house, the beauty yet strangeness of the scenery, and the delight Shelley took in all this—he never was in better health or spirits than during this time. I was not well in body or mind. My nerves were wound up to the utmost irritation, and the sense of misfortune hung over my spirits. No words can tell you how I hated our house and the country about it. Shelley reproached me for this—his health was good and the place was quite after his own heart—what could I answer—that the people were wild and hateful, that though the country was beautiful yet I liked a more *countryfied* place, that there was great difficulty in living—that all our Tuxans would leave us, and that the very jargon of these *Genovese* was disgusting. This was all I had to say, but no words could describe my feelings—the beauty of the woods made me weep and shudder—so vehement was my

feeling of dislike that I used to rejoice when the winds and waves permitted me to go out in the boat so that I was not obliged to take my usual walk among tree-shaded paths, alleys of vine-festooned trees—all that before I doted on—and that now weighed on me. My only moments of peace were on board that unhappy boat when lying down with my head on his knee I shut my eyes and felt the wind and our swift motion alone. My ill health might account for much of this—bathing in the sea somewhat relieved me—but on the eighth of June (I think it was) I was threatened with a miscarriage, and after a week of great ill health, on Sunday the 16th this took place at eight in the morning. I was so ill that for seven hours I lay nearly lifeless—kept from fainting by brandy, vinegar, eau-de-Cologne, &c.—at length ice was brought to our solitude—it came before the doctor so Claire and Jane were afraid of using it; but Shelley over ruled them and by an unsparing application of it I was restored. They all thought, and so did I at one time, that I was about to die. I hardly wish that I had, my own Shelley could never have lived without me, the sense of eternal misfortune would have pressed too heavily upon him, and what would have become of my poor babe? My convalescence was slow, and during it a strange occurrence happened to retard it. But first I must describe our house to you. The floor on which we lived was thus—



"1 is a terrace that went the whole length of our house and was precipitous to the sea; 2 the large dining-hall; 3 a private staircase; 4 my bedroom; 5 Mrs. W.'s bedroom; 6 Shelley's; and 7 the entrance from the great staircase. Now to return. As I said Shelley was at first in perfect health but having over fatigued himself one day, and then the fright my illness gave him caused a return of nervous sensations and visions as bad as in his worst times. I think it was the Saturday after my illness, while yet unable to walk I was confined to my bed—in the middle of the night I was awake by hearing him scream and come rushing into my room; I was sure that he was asleep, and tried to waken him by calling on him, but he continued to scream which inspired me with such a panic that I jumped out of bed and ran across the hall to Mrs. W.'s room where I fell through weakness, though I was so frightened that I got up again immediately—she let me in and Williams went to S. who had been wakened by my get-

ting out of bed—he said that he had not been asleep and that it was a vision that he saw that had frightened him—But as he declared that he had not screamed it was certainly a dream and no waking vision—what had frightened him was this—He dreamt that, lying as he did in bed Edward and Jane came in to him, they were in the most horrible condition, their bodies lacerated—their bones starting through their skin, their faces pale yet stained with blood, they could hardly walk, but Edward was the weakest, and Jane was supporting him—Edward said —‘Get up Shelley, the sea is flooding the house and it is all coming down.’ S. got up, he thought, and went to his window that looked on the terrace and the sea and thought he saw the sea rushing in. Suddenly his vision changed and he saw the figure of himself strangling me, that had made him rush into my room, yet fearful of frightening me he dare not approach to bed, when my jumping out awoke him, or as he phrased it caused his vision to vanish. All this was frightful enough, and talking it over the next morning he told me that he had had many visions lately—he had seen the figure of himself which met him as he walked on the terrace and said to him—‘How long do you mean to be content?’—no very terrific words and certainly not prophetic of what has occurred. But Shelley had often seen these figures when ill; but the strangest thing is that Mrs. W. saw

him. Now Jane though a woman of sensibility has not much imagination and is not in the slightest degree nervous—neither in dreams or other wise. She was standing one day, the day before I was taken ill, at a window that looked on the terrace with Trelawny it was day—she saw as she thought Shelley pass by the window, as he often was then, without a coat or jacket—he passed again—now as he passed both times the same way—and as from the side toward which he went each time there was no way to get back except past the window again (except over a wall twenty feet from the ground), she was struck at seeing him pass twice thus and looked out, and seeing him no more she cried,—‘Good God! can Shelley have leaped from the wall? Where can he be gone?’ ‘Shelley?’ said Trelawny—‘no Shelley has passed—What do you mean?’ Trelawny says that she trembled exceedingly when she heard this, and it proved indeed that Shelley had never been on the terrace and was far off at the time she saw him. Well we thought [no] more of these things and I slowly got better. Having heard from Hunt that he had sailed from Genoa, on Monday July 1st, S., Edward, and Capt. Roberts (the Gent. who built our boat) departed in our boat for Leghorn to receive him—I was then just better, had begun to crawl from my bedroom to the terrace, but bad spirits succeeded to ill health, and this departure of Shelley’s seemed to add insufferably



to my misery. I could not endure that he should go. I called him back two or three times, and told him that if I did not see him soon I would go to Pisa with the child—I cried bitterly when he went away. They went, and Jane, Claire, and I remained alone with the children—I could not walk out, and though I gradually gathered strength it was slowly, and my ill spirits increased; in my letters to him I entreated him to return—‘The feeling that some misfortune would happen,’ I said, ‘haunted me.’ I feared for the child, for the idea of danger connected with him never struck me—when Jane and Claire took their evening walk I used to patrol the terrace, oppressed with wretchedness, yet gazing on the most beautiful scene in the world. This Gulph of Spezzia is divided into many small bays of which ours was far the most beautiful—the two horns of the bay (so to express myself) were wood-covered promontories crowned with castles—at the foot of these on the furthest was Lerici, on the nearest San<sup>t</sup> Arenzo—Lerici being above a mile by land from us and San Arenzo about a hundred or two yards—trees covered the hills that enclosed this bay, and their beautiful groups were picturesquely contrasted with the rocks the castle and the town—the sea lay far extended in front, while to the west we saw the promontory and island which formed one of the extreme boundaries of the Gulph—to see the sun set upon this scene, the stars shine, and the moon rise was a

sight of wondrous beauty, but to me it added only to my wretchedness—I repeated to my self all that another would have said to console me, and told myself the tale of love, peace, and competence which I enjoyed—but I answered myself by tears—did not my William die? and did I hold my Percy by a firmer tenure?—Yet I thought when he, when my Shelley returns I shall be happy—he will comfort me, if my boy be ill he will restore him and encourage me. I had a letter or two from Shelley mentioning the difficulties he had in establishing the Hunts and that he was unable to fix the time of his return. Thus a week passed. On Monday 8th, Jane had a letter from Edward, dated Saturday; he said that he waited at Leghorn for S. who was at Pisa,—that S.'s return was uncertain; 'but,' he continued, 'if he should not come by Monday I will come in a felucca, and you may expect me Tuesday evening at furthest.' This was Monday, but with us it was stormy all day and we did not at all suppose that they could put to sea. At twelve at night we had a thunder storm, Tuesday it rained all day and was calm—the sky wept on their graves—on Wednesday—the wind was fair from Leghorn, and in the evening several feluccas arrived thence—one brought word that they had sailed Monday, but we did not believe them—Thursday was another day of fair wind, and when twelve at night came and we did not see the tall sails of the little boat double the promontory be-

fore us we began to fear, not the truth, but some illness—some disagreeable news for their detention. Jane got so uneasy that she determined to proceed the next day to Leghorn in a boat to see what was the matter—Friday came and with it a heavy sea and bad wind—Jane however resolved to be rowed to Leghorn (since no boat could sail) and busied herself in preparations—I wished her to wait for letters, since Friday was letter day—she would not—but the sea detained her, the swell rose so that no boat would venture out.—At twelve at noon our letters came—there was one from Hunt to Shelley, it said—‘Pray write to tell us how you got home, for they said that you had bad weather after you sailed Monday, and we are anxious’—the paper fell from me—I trembled all over—Jane read it—‘Then it is all over!’ she said. ‘No, my dear Jane,’ I cried, ‘it is not all over, but this suspense is dreadful—come with me, we will go to Leghorn, we will post to be swift and learn our fate.’ We crossed to Lerici, despair in our hearts; they raised our spirits there by telling us that no accident had been heard of and that it must have been known &c.—but still our fear was great—and without resting we posted to Pisa. It must have been fearful to see us—two poor, wild, aghast creatures—driving like Matilda towards the sea to learn if we were to be forever doomed to misery. I knew that Hunt was at Pisa at Lord Byron’s house but I thought that L. B. was at

Leghorn. I settled that we should drive to Casa Lanfranchi, that I should get out and ask the fearful question of Hunt, 'Do you know anything of Shelley?' On entering Pisa the idea of seeing Hunt for the first time for four years under such circumstance, and asking him such a question, was so terrific to me that it was with difficulty that I prevented myself from going into convulsions—my struggles were dreadful—they knocked at the door, and some one called out 'Chi è?' it was the Guiccioli's maid—L. B. was in Pisa—Hunt was in bed, so I was to see L. B. instead of him.—This was a great relief to me; I staggered up stairs—the Guiccioli came to meet me smiling while I could hardly say—'Where is he—Sapete alcuna cosa di Shelley?'—They knew nothing—he had left Pisa on Sunday—on Monday he had sailed—there had been bad weather Monday afternoon—more they knew not. Both L. B. and the lady have told me since—that on that terrific evening I looked more like a ghost than a woman—light seemed to emanate from my features, my face was very white—I looked like marble.—Alas I had risen almost from a bed of sickness for this journey—I had travelled all day—it was now twelve at night and we refusing to rest proceeded to Leghorn—not in despair—no, for then we must have died, but with sufficient hope to keep up the agitation of the spirits which was all my life. It was past two in the morning when we arrived—they took us to the

wrong inn—neither Trelawny or Capt. Roberts were there, nor did we exactly know where they were so we were obliged to wait until daylight. We threw ourselves drest on our beds and slept a little, but at 6 o'clock we went to one or two inns to ask for one or the other of these gentlemen. We found Roberts at the Globe. He came down to us with a face which seemed to tell us that the worst was true, and here we learned all that had occurred during the week that they had been absent from us, and under what circumstances they had departed on their return. —Shelley had passed most of the time at Pisa—arranging the affairs of the Hunts—and screwing L. B.'s mind to the sticking place about the journal. He had found this a difficult task at first but at length he had succeeded to his heart's content with both points. Mrs. Mason said that she saw him in better health and spirits than she had ever known him when he took leave of her Sunday July 7th, his face burnt by the sun, and his heart light that he had succeeded in rendering the Hunts tolerably comfortable. Edward had remained at Leghorn. On Monday July 8th during the morning they were employed in buying many things—eatable &c. for our solitude. There had been a thunder storm early but about noon the weather was fine and the wind right fair for Lerici —They were impatient to be gone. Roberts said, stay until to-morrow to see if the weather is settled and

S. might have stayed but Edward was in so great an anxiety to reach home—saying they would get there in seven hours in that wind—that they sailed! S. being in one of those extravagant fits of good spirits in which you have sometimes seen him. Roberts went out to the end of the mole and watched them out of sight—they sailed at one and went off at the rate of about seven knots—about three—Roberts, who was still on the mole—saw wind coming from the Gulph—or rather what the Italians call a *temporale*. Anxious to know how the boat would weather the storm, he got leave to go up the tower, and with the glass discovered them about ten miles out at sea, off *Via Reggio*, they were taking in their top-sails—‘The haze of the storm,’ he said, ‘hid them from me and I saw them no more.—When the storm cleared I looked again fancying that I should see them on their return to us—but there was no boat on the sea.’—This then was all we knew, yet we did not despair—they might have been driven over to Corsica, and not knowing the coast and gone God knows where. Reports favored this belief—it was even said that they had been seen in the Gulph—we resolved to return with all possible speed—we sent a courier to go from tower to tower along the coast to know if any thing had been seen or found, and at 9 A.M. we quitted Leghorn, stopped but one moment at Pisa, and proceeded towards Lerici—When at two miles from *Via Reggio*

we rode down to that town to know if they knew any thing—here our calamity first began to break on us—a little boat and a water cask had been found five miles off—they had manufactured a *piccolessemalancia* of thin planks stitched by a shoe maker, just to let them run on shore without wetting themselves as our boat drew four feet water.—The description of that found tallied with this—but then this boat was very cumbersome, and in bad weather they might have been easily led to throw it overboard—the cask frightened me most—but the same reason might in some sort be given for that. I must tell you that Jane and I were not now alone. Trelawny accompanied us back to our home. We journeyed on and reached the Magra about half past ten P.M. I cannot describe to you what I felt in the first moment when fording this river, I felt the water splash about our wheels—I was suffocated—I gasped for breath—I thought I should have gone into convulsions, and I struggled violently that Jane might not perceive it—looking down the river I saw the two great lights burning at the *focce*—a voice from within me seemed to cry aloud, ‘That is his grave.’ After passing the river I gradually recovered. Arriving at Lerici we were obliged to cross our little bay in a boat—San Arenzo was illuminated for a festa—what a scene—the waving sea—the scirroco—the lights of the town towards which we rode—and our own desolate hearts—that colored all with a shroud

—we landed; nothing had been heard of them. This was Saturday July 13, and thus we waited until Thursday July 25th thrown about by hope and fear. We send messengers along the coast towards Genoa and to Via Reggio—nothing had been found more than the *lencetta*; reports were brought us—we hoped—and yet to tell you all the agony we endured during those twelve days would be to make you conceive a universe of pain—each moment intolerable in giving place to one still worse. The people of the country too added to one's discomfort—they are like wild savages—on festas the men and women and children in different bands—the sexes always separate—pass the whole night in dancing on the sands close to our door, running into the sea, then back again, and screaming all the time one perpetual air—the most detestable in the world—then the scirroco perpetually blew and the sea forever moaned their dirge. On Thursday 25th Trelawny left us to go to Leghorn to see what was doing or what could be done. On Friday I was very ill, but as evening came on I said to Jane—'If any thing had been found on the coast Trelawny would have returned to let us know. He is not returned, so I hope.' About seven o'clock P.M. he did return—all was over—all was quiet now, they had been found washed on shore. Well all this was to be endured.

"Well what more have I to say? The next day we returned to Pisa and here we are still—days pass away



—one after another—and we live thus. We are all together—we shall quit Italy together. Jane must proceed to London—if letters do not alter my views I shall remain in Paris.—Thus we live—seeing the Hunts now and then. Poor Hunt has suffered terribly as you may guess. Lord Byron is very kind to me and comes with the Guiccioli to see me often. To-day—this day—the sun shining in the sky—they are gone to the desolate sea coast to perform the last offices to their earthly remains, Hunt, L. B. and Trelawny. The quarantine laws would not permit us to remove them sooner—and now only on condition that we burn them to ashes. That I do not dislike.—His rest shall be at Rome beside my child—where one day I also shall join them Adonais is not Keats's, it is his own elegy—he bids you there go to Rome—I have seen the spot where he now lies—the sticks that mark the spot where the sands cover him—he shall not be there, it is too near Via Reggio—they are now about this fearful office—and I live! One more circumstance I will mention. As I said he took leave of Mrs. Mason in high spirits on Sunday—‘Never,’ said she, ‘did I see him look happier than the last glance I had of his countenance.’ On Monday he was lost—on Monday night she dreamt that she was some where—she knew not where—and he came looking very pale and fearfully melancholy—she said to him—‘You look ill, you are tired, sit down and eat.’ ‘No,’ he replied, ‘I shall

never eat more, I have not a soldo in the world.'—'Nonsense,' said she, 'this is no inn—you need not pay.'—'Perhaps,' he answered, 'it is the worse for that.' Then she awoke, and going to sleep again she dreamt that my Percy was dead, and she awoke crying bitterly—so bitterly and felt so miserable—that she said to herself—'Why if the little boy should die I should not feel it in this manner.' She was so struck with these dreams that she mentioned them to her servants the next day—saying she hoped all was well with us.

"Well here is my story—the last story that I shall have to tell—all that might have been bright in my life is now despoiled.—I shall live to improve myself, to take care of my child, and render myself worthy to join him. Soon my weary pilgrimage will begin—I rest now—but soon I must leave Italy—and then there is an end of all but despair. Adieu. I hope you are well and happy. I have an idea that while he was at Pisa he received a letter from you that I have never seen—so not knowing where to direct I shall send this letter to Peacock—I shall send it open—he may be glad to read it.

"Yours ever truly

"MARY W. S.

"PISA, August 15th, 1822.

"I shall probably write to you soon again. I have

left out a material circumstance—a fishing-boat saw them go down.—It was about four in the afternoon—they saw the boy at mast head, when baffling winds struck the sails—they had looked away a moment, and looking again the boat was gone—This is their story but there is little doubt that these men might have saved them, at least Edward who could swim. They could not they said get near her—but three quarters of an hour after passed over the spot where they had seen her—they protested no wreck of her was visible, but Roberts going on board their boat found several spars belonging to her.—Perhaps they let them perish to obtain these. Trelawny thinks he can get her up, since another fisherman thinks he has found the spot where she lies, having drifted near shore. T. does this perhaps to know the cause of her wreck—but I care little about it.”

When the dreadful tidings of Shelley's certain death reached Hunt he wrote to Mrs. Shelley, whom he had not yet seen, this letter of noblest friendship:

“DEAREST MARY,—I trust you will have set out on your return from that dismal place, before you receive this. You will also have seen Trelawny. God bless you and enable us all to be a support to one another. Let us do our best if it is only for that purpose. It is easier for me to say that I will do it, than for you: but

whatever happens, this I can safely say, that I belong to those whom Shelley loves, and that all which it is possible for me to do for them, now and ever is theirs. I will grieve with them, endure with them, and if it be necessary, work for them while I have life.—Your most affectionate friend,

“LEIGH HUNT.

“Marianne sends you a thousand loves, and longs, with myself, to try whether we can say or do one thing that can enable you and Mrs Williams to bear up a little better. But we rely on your great strength of mind.”

But this letter was not long afterward followed by an act so thoughtless, so selfish, that it seemed to belie the natural goodness of Hunt's nature. His enthusiastic love for Shelley, his grief at the awful sacrifice, made him forget that Mrs. Shelley's claim was paramount over that of any friend, however dear. Of his ungracious conduct in regard to the possession of Shelley's heart, Captain Roberts writes: “After the funeral rites of Shelley had been performed, Trelawny gave the heart which had remained unconsumed to Hunt. Mary wrote to Hunt, requesting that it might be sent to her. Hunt refused to part with it unless Mary would maintain her claim by strong and conclusive arguments. He added that he thought it

probable that the relic of his friend would remain in his possession. Mary was in despair. At length the amiable Mrs. Williams undertook to obtain the fulfilment of Mary's wishes. She wrote to Hunt, and represented how grievous and melancholy it was that Shelley's remains should become a source of dissension between his dearest friends. She obtained her purpose. Hunt said that she had brought forward the only argument that could have induced him to yield."

Could anything illustrate more clearly the gentleness and forbearance of Mary Shelley's character than that she entirely forgave and forgot this indignity of Leigh Hunt's, and never had in her heart anything but the most affectionate friendship for him?

Shelley's heart was deposited in Rome, in the English cemetery, and Trelawny planted around the tomb eight cypresses. Beside the simple Latin inscription which Leigh Hunt wrote, Trelawny had placed on the stone some lines from the "Tempest," a favorite with Shelley:

" Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange."

From Pisa Mrs. Shelley wrote the two following letters to Miss Curran:

" PISA, July 26th, 1822

" MY DEAR MISS CURRAN,

" You will have received my letter concerning the pictures, and now I have another request to make. Your kindness to us when we were both so unhappy—your great kindness—makes me do this without the feeling of unwillingness, which I have in asking favors of any other person. Besides you are unhappy, and therefore can better sympathize and console the miserable. You would greatly oblige me, if you would get me from one of those shops in the Piazza di Spagna two mosaic stones, about as large as a half-crown piece. On one I wish an heart's-ease to be depicted: they call these flowers in Italian Socera huoro, or Viola far falla, Viola regolina, Viola renagola: on the other (I think I have seen such a one) a view of the tomb of Cestius. I remember also that in one of your rooms, there was a view of this place, and the people of the house might part with it, or a modern artist at Rome might make one for me which would give me great pleasure. The difficulty is to pay you for these things: but as soon (if you have the extreme kindness to fulfil my requests) as I know what money you spend for me, I will take care it shall be remitted to you without delay.

" Will you indeed my dear Miss Curran, do as I ask you? Alas! these trifles (not the picture—that is no trifle) serve as a kind of vent for those sentiments

of personal affections and attentions which are so cruelly crushed forever. In a little poem of his are these words; 'Pansies let my flowers be.' Pansies are heart's ease; and in another he says, that pansies mean memory. So I would make myself a locket to wear in eternal memory, with the representation of his flower, and with his hair; such things must now do instead of words, of love, and the dear habit of seeing him daily. Pity me then, and indulge me.

"In my last letter I was so selfish that I did not ask after your welfare. Pray write to me. I must ever be grateful to you for your kindness to us in misfortune: and how much more when, through your talents, and your goodness, I shall possess the only likeness that is of my husband's earthly form.

"My little Percy is well—not so beautiful as William, though there is some resemblance.

"Yours ever truly,

"MARY W. SHELLEY."

"PISA, August 14th, 1822

"MY DEAR MISS CURRAN,

"I have written two letters to you, requesting that favor now nearer my heart than any other earthly thing—the picture of my Shelley. Perhaps you have been at Gensano, and that delays your reply: perhaps you have altered your residence, and have not received my letters.

"I am well: so is my boy. We leave Italy soon; so I am particularly anxious to obtain this treasure, which I am sure you will give me as soon as possible. I have no other likeness of him: and in so utter desolation, how invaluable to me is your picture. Will you not send it? Will you not answer me without delay? Your former kindness bids me hope everything.

"Very sincerely yours,  
"M. W. SHELLEY."

The kind letter below came to her from her father as soon as he heard of her sorrow. But it was to Mrs. Gisborne that she turned in her outbursts of grief. This dear friend had known and loved Shelley; she had been with them during their life in Italy. Mrs. Shelley turned to her as she would have turned to her mother, and Mrs. Gisborne knew, with a woman's instinct, that she needed not philosophy but sympathy.

"9th Aug 1822.

"MY POOR GIRL! What do you mean to do with yourself? You surely do not mean to stay in Italy? How glad I should be to be near you, and to endeavor by new expedients each day, to make up for your loss! But you are the best judge. If Italy is a country to which in these few years, you are natural-



ized, and if England is become dull and odious to you, then stay.

"I should think however that now you have lost your closest friend, your mind would naturally turn homewards [to] your earliest friend. Is it not so? Surely we might be a great support to each other, under the trials to which we are reserved. What signify a few outward adversities, if we find a friend at home?

"Above all let me entreat you to keep up your courage. You have many duties to perform: you must now be the father as well as the mother; and I trust you have energy of character enough to enable you to perform your duties honorably and well.

"Ever and ever most affectionately yours

"W. GODWIN."

Mrs. Shelley wrote this letter to Mrs. Gisborne shortly before leaving the well-loved Pisa :

"PISA, September 10th, 1822

"And so here I am! I continue to exist; to see one day succeed the other; to dread night, but more to dread morning, and hail another cheerless day. My boy, too, is alas! no consolation. When I think how he loved him—the plans he had for his education—his sweet childish voice strikes me to the heart. Why should he live in this world of pain and anguish?

And if he went I should go too, and we should all sleep in peace.

"At times I feel an energy within me to combat with my destiny—but again I sink. I have but one hope for which I live—to render myself worthy to join him; and such a feeling sustains me during moments of enthusiasm; but darkness and misery soon overwhelm the mind, when all near objects bring agony alone with them. People used to call me lucky in my star; you see now how true such a prophecy is.

"I was fortunate in having fearlessly placed my destiny in the hands of one who—a superior being among men, a bright planetary spirit enshrined in an earthly temple—raised me to the height of happiness. So far am I now happy, that I would not change my situation as his widow with that of the most prosperous woman in the world; and surely the time will at length come, when I shall be at peace, and my brain and heart be no longer alive with unutterable anguish. I can conceive but of one circumstance that could afford me the semblance of content—that is the being permitted to live where I am now, in the same house, in the same state, occupied alone with my child, in collecting his manuscripts, writing his life and thus to go easily to my grave.

"But this must not be! Even if circumstances did not compel me to return to England. I would not stay another summer in Italy with my child. I will

at least do my best to render him well and happy and the idea that my circumstances may at all injure him is the fiercest pang my mind endures.

"I wrote you a long letter, containing a slight sketch of my sufferings. I sent it directed to Peacock, at the India House, because accident led me to believe that you were no longer in London. I said in that, that on that day (Aug. 15th) they had gone to perform the last offices for him; however I erred in this for on that day, those of Edward were alone fulfilled, and they returned on the 16th to celebrate Shelley's. I will say nothing of the ceremony, since Trelawny has written an account of it, to be printed in the forthcoming journal: I will only say that all except his heart, (which was inconsumable) was burnt, and that two days ago I went to Leghorn and beheld the small box that contained his earthly dress. Those smiles—that form. Great God! no—he is not there: he is with me, about me—life of my life, and soul of my soul! If his divine spirit did not penetrate mine I could not survive to weep thus.

"I will mention the friends that I have here that you may form an idea of our situation. Mrs Williams and I live together. We have one purse, and joined in misery we are for the present joined in life.

"The poor girl withers like a lily. She lives for her children but it is a living death. Lord Byron has been very kind. But the friend to whom we are

eternally indebted is Trelawny. I have, of course mentioned him to you as one who wishes to be considered eccentric, but who was noble and generous at bottom. I always thought so, even when no fact proved it: and Shelley agreed with me as he always did, or rather, I with him. We heard people speak against him on account of his vagaries; we said to one another, 'Still we like him; we believe him to be good.' Once even when a whim of his led him to treat me with something like impertinence, I forgave him, and I have now been well rewarded. In my outline of events, you will see how unasked he returned with Jane and me from Leghorn to Lerici; how he stayed with us miserable creatures twelve days there, endeavoring to keep up our spirits; how he left us on Thursday, and finding our misfortune confirmed, then without rest returned on Friday to us, and again without rest returned with us to Pisa on Saturday. These were no common services. Since that he has gone through by himself, all the annoyances of dancing attendance on consuls and governors for permission to fulfil the last duties to those gone, and attending the ceremony himself. All the disagreeable part, and all the fatigue fell on him. As Hunt said, 'He worked with the meanest, and felt with the best.' He is generous to a distressing degree; but after all these benefits to us, what I most thank him for is this:—when on that night of agony—that Friday

night—he returned to announce that hope was dead for us: when he had told me that, his earthly frame being found, his spirit was no longer to be my guide, protector and companion in this dark world,—he did not attempt to console me: that would have been too cruelly useless; but he launches forth, into as it were, an overflowing and eloquent praise of my divine Shelley, till I was almost happy that I was thus unhappy, to be fed by the praises of him, and to dwell on the eulogy that his loss thus drew from his friend.

“God knows what will be come of me. My life is now very monotonous as to outward events; yet how diversified by internal feeling. How often in the intensity of grief, does one instant seem to fill and embrace the universe! As to the rest,—the mechanical spending of my time—of course I have a great deal to do, preparing for my journey. I make no visits, except one, once in about ten days, to Mrs. Mason. Trelawny resides chiefly at Leghorn, since he is captain of Lord Byron's vessel, the ‘Bolivar.’ He comes to see us about once a week, and Lord Byron visits us about twice a week, accompanied by the Guiccioli; but seeing people is an annoyance which I am happy to be spared. Solitude is my only help and resource. Accustomed, even when he was with me to spend much of my time alone, I can at those moments forget myself, until some idea, which I think I would

communicate to him occurs, and then the yawning and dark gulf, again displays itself, unshaded by the rainbows which the imagination had formed. Despair, energy, love, desponding and excessive affliction, are like clouds driven across my mind, one by one, until trees blot the scene, and weariness of spirit consigns me to temporary repose.

"I shudder with horror when I look back upon what I have suffered: and when I think of the wild and miserable thoughts that have possessed me, I say to myself: 'Is it true that I ever feel thus?' And then I weep in pity for myself: yet each day adds to the stock of sorrow, and death is the only end. I would study, and I hope I shall. I would write, and when I am settled, I may. But were it not for the steady hope I entertain of joining him, what a mockery would be this world! Without that hope, I could not study or write; for fame and usefulness (except as far as regards my child) are nullities to me. Yet I shall be happy if any thing I ever produce may exalt and soften sorrow, as the writings of the divinities of our race have mine. But how can I aspire to that.

"The world will surely one day feel what it has lost, when this bright child of song deserted her. Is not *Adonais* his own elegy? And there does he truly depict the universal woe which should overspread all good minds, since he has ceased to be their fellow-laborer in this worldly scene. How lovely does he

paint death to be, and with what heart felt sorrow does one repeat that line—

“ ‘ But I am chained to time, and cannot thence depart !’

“ How long do you think I will live? As long as my mother? Then eleven long years must intervene. I am now on the eve of completing my five and twentieth year. How dearly young for one so lost as I ! How young in years for one who lives ages each day in sorrow ! Think you that those moments are counted in my life, as in other people's ? Ah, no ! The day before the sea closed over mine own Shelley, he said to Marianne, ‘ If I die to-morrow, I have lived to be older than my father, I am ninety years of age.’ Thus also may I say. The eight years I passed with him, were spun out beyond the usual length of a man's life : and what I have suffered since, will write years on my brow, and entrench them in my heart. Surely I am not long for this world. Most sure would I be were it not for my boy ; but God grant that I may live to make his early years happy !

“ Well, adieu ! I have no events to write about, and can therefore only scrawl about my feelings. This letter, indeed, is only the sequel of my last. In that I closed the history of all that can interest me. That letter I wish you to send my father : the present one it is best not.

“ I suppose I shall see you in England some of these

days: but I shall write to you again before I quit *this* place. Be as happy as you can, and hope for better things in the next world. By firm hope, you may attain your wishes. Again adieu!

“Affectionately yours,

“M. W. SHELLEY.”

In September, Mrs. Shelley went to Genoa and secured a house for Lord Byron and another for herself and the Hunts. She lived there and at Albara, just outside the city, until she quitted Italy in the summer of 1823. Mrs. Hunt, Marianne, of whom she speaks, was the mother of many small children, and was moreover in very precarious health, and Mrs. Shelley, being familiar with the language and the land, was of great use to her in selecting her house and household. Mrs. Shelley's letters to Mrs. Gisborne give one an idea of her life at that time. She was, indeed, alone. But the winter with the Hunts, cheerful sight of children's faces, constant occupation, and contact with people promised better things, which a letter later on shows were not entirely unfulfilled. But it was a constant struggle against depression.

About the first letter that Mrs. Shelley wrote after reaching Genoa was to Miss Clairmont, who was about to start for Vienna, where her brother was a tutor.



"Sept 15, 1822.

"MY DEAR CLAIRE,—I do not wonder that you were and are melancholy—or that the excess of that feeling should oppress you. Great God! what we have gone through—what variety of care and misery, all closed now in blackest night. And I—am I not melancholy? here in this busy hateful Genoa, where nothing speaks to me of him, except the sea which is his murderer—well I shall have his books and manuscript, and in those I shall live, and from the study of those I do expect some instants of content. In solitude my imagination and ever moving thoughts may afford me some seconds of exaltation, that may render me both happier here and worthier of him hereafter. Such as I felt walking up a mountain by myself, at sunrise during my journey—when the rocks looked black about me, and a white mist concealed all but them—I thought then, that thinking of him and exciting my mind, my days might pass in a kind of peace—but these thoughts are so fleeting—and then I expect unhappiness alone from all the *worldly* part of my life—from my intercourse with human beings—I *know* that will bring nothing but unhappiness to me. If indeed I except Trelawny, who appears so truly generous and kind.

"But I will not talk of myself. You have enough to annoy and make you miserable—and in nothing can I assist you. But I do hope that you will find

Germany better suited to you in every way than Italy—and that you will make friends—and more than all, become really attached to some one there.

“I wish when I was in Pisa, that you had said you thought you should be short of money, and I would have left you more—but you seemed to think 150 francs plenty.—I would not go on with Goëthe [sic] except with a fixed price per sheet to be regularly paid—and that price not less than five guineas—Make this be understood fully through Hunt before you go, and then I will take care that you get the money—but if you not [sic] *fix* it, then I cannot manage so well.

“You are going to Vienna, how anxiously do I hope to find peace—I do not look to find it here—Genoa has a bad atmosphere for me I fear, and nothing but the horror of being a burden to my family prevents my accompanying Jane—If I had *any* fixed income I would go at least to Paris—and I shall go the minute I have one.

“Adieu my dear Claire, write to me often as I shall to you,

“Affectionately yours

“MARY W. S.

“I cannot get your German dictionary now, since I must have put it in my great case of books—but I will send it by the first opportunity.”

This next letter is to Mrs. Gisborne, and speaks of Mrs. Williams's departure from Italy.

" GENOA, September 17th, 1822.

"I am here alone in Genoa; quite, quite alone! Jane has left me to proceed to England, and except my sleeping child, I am alone. Since you do not communicate with my father, you will perhaps be surprised after my last letter, that I do not come to England. I have written to him a long account of the argument of all my friends to dissuade me from that miserable journey: Jane will detail them to you; and therefore I merely say now that, having no business there, I am determined not to spend that money, which will support me nearly a year here, in a journey, the sole end of which appears to me the necessity I should be under when arrived in London, of being a burden to my father. When my crowns are gone if Sir T. refuses, I hope to be able to support myself by my writings and mine own Shelley's MSS. At least during many long months I shall have peace as to money affairs: and one evil the less is much to one, whose existence is suffering alone. Lord Byron has a house here and will arrive soon: I have taken a house for the Hunts and myself, outside one of the gates. It is large and neat, with a podère attached. We shall pay about eighty crowns between us; so I hope that I shall find tranquillity from care this winter

—though that may be the last of my life so free. Yet I do not hope it though I say so;—Hope is a word that belongs not to my situation. He—my own beloved—the exalted and divine Shelley, has left me alone in this miserable world—this earth canopied by the eternal starry heaven, where is he—where—Oh, my God! Yes—where I shall one day be!

“Jane quitted me this morning at four. After she left me I again went to rest and thought of Herghano, its halls, its cypresses, the perfume of its mountains, and the gayety of our life beneath their shadow. Then I dozed awhile and in my dream saw dear Edward most clearly. He came he said, to pass a few hours with us, but could not stay long. Then I woke, and the day began. I went out, took Hunt's house—but as I walked, I felt that which is with me the sign of unutterable grief. I am not given to tears; and though my most miserable fate has often turned my eyes to fountains, yet oftener I suffer agonies unassuaged by tears. But during these last sufferings, I have felt an oppression at my heart I never felt before. It is not a palpitation, but a *stringimento* which is quite convulsive, and did I not struggle greatly, would cause violent hysterics. Looking on the sea, or hearing its roar,—his dirge—it comes upon me: but these are corporeal sufferings I can get over. That which is insurmountable, is the constant feeling of despair that shadows me; I seem to walk on a narrow path with

fathomless precipices all around me: yet where can I fall? I have already fallen, and all that comes of bad or good is a mere mockery.

"Those about me have no idea of what I suffer: none are sufficiently interested in me to observe that, though my lips smile, my eyes are blank, or to notice the desolate look that I cast upwards towards the sky. Pardon dear friend, this selfishness in writing thus. There are moments when the heart must sfgare, or be suffocated: and such a moment is this. When quite alone, my babe sleeping, and dear Jane having just left me, it is with difficulty that I prevent myself from flying from mental misery by bodily exertion, when to run into that vast grave (the sea), until I sink to rest would be a pleasure to me: and instead of this I write, and as I write, I say, 'Oh God! have pity on me!' At least I will have pity on you. Good night! I will finish this when people are about me and I am in a more cheerful mood. Good night! I will go look at the stars: they are eternal; so is he—so am I.

"You have not written to me since my misfortune. I understand this: you first waited for a letter from me, and that letter told you not to write. But answer this as soon as you receive it. Talk to me of yourself and also of my English affairs. I am afraid that they will not go on very well in my absence; but it would cost more to set them right than they are worth.

I will however let you know what I think my friends ought to do, that when you talk to Peacock, he may learn what I wish. A claim should be made on the part of Shelley's executors for a maintenance for my child and myself from Sir Timothy. Lord Byron is ready to do this or any other service for me that his office of executor demands from him. But I do not wish it to be done separately by him, and I wait to hear from England before I ask him to write to Whitton on the subject. Secondly Ollier must be asked for all MSS., and some plan be reflected on for the best manner of republishing Shelley's works as well as the writings he has left. Who will allow money to Ianthe and Charles? As for you, my dear friends, I do not see what you can do for me, except to send me the originals or copies of Shelley's most interesting letters to you. I hope soon to get into my house, where writing, copying Shelley's MSS., walking and being of some use in the education of Marianne's children, will be my occupations. Where is that letter in verse Shelley once wrote to you. Let me have a copy of it. Here is a long letter all about myself: but though I cannot write I like to hear of others.

"Adieu, dear friends! Your sincerely attached,  
"MARY W. SHELLEY."

Only her own words can tell how bitterly lonely her life now was, how desperate the struggle. It was into her journal that she poured out the anguish of her heart. If we did not find in those pages, beside the record of her sorrow, so much of the real woman, it would seem almost like sacrilege to read them, now that the drooping being who hung over them with fainting spirit, has long since recorded her last words. But Mrs. Shelley's grief was so noble that one feels as he reads that Shelley's death was like the separating of twin stars whose light in travelling to this world had so blended and commingled that it seemed like the radiance from a single luminary.

On October 2, 1822, she resumes her journal :

"On the 8th of July I finished my journal. This is a curious coincidence. The date still remains—the fatal 8th—a monument to show that all ended then. And I begin again? Oh! never. But several motives induce me when the day has gone down, and all is silent around me, steeped in sleep, to pen, as occasion wills, my reflections and feelings. First, I have no friend. For eight years I communicated with unlimited freedom, with one whose genius, far transcending mine, awakened and guided my thoughts. I conversed with him; rectified my errors of judgment; obtained new lights from him; and my mind was satisfied. Now I am alone—oh how alone. The stars may hold my tears, and the winds drink my sighs; but

my thoughts are a sealed treasure, which I can confide to none. But can I express all I feel? Can I give words to thoughts and feelings, that as a tempest hurry me along? Is this the sand that the ever flowing sea of thought would impress indelibly? Alas! I am alone. No eye answers mine; my voice can with none assume its natural modulation: What a change! Oh, my beloved Shelley! how often during those happy days—happy, though checkered—I thought how superiorly gifted I had been in being united to one to whom I could unveil myself, and who could understand me! Well, then, I am now reduced to these white pages, which I am to blot with dark imagery. As I write, let me think what he would have said if, speaking thus to him he could have answered me. Yes, my own heart I would fain know what you think of my desolate state: what you think I ought to do, what to think. I guess you would answer thus:—‘Seek to know your own heart, and learning what it best loves, try to enjoy that.’ Well, I cast my eyes around, and looking forward to the bounded prospect in view I ask myself what pleases me there. My child;—so many feelings arise when I think of him that I turn aside to think no more. Those I most loved are gone forever;—those who held the second rank are absent: and among those near me as yet, I trust to the disinterested kindness of one alone. Beneath all this my imagination ever



flags. Literary labors, the improvement of my mind, and the enlargement of my ideas, are the only occupations that elevate me from my lethargy; all events seem to lead me to that one point, and the courses of destiny having dragged me to that single resting-place have left me. Father, mother, friend husband, children—all made as it were, the team that conducted me here; and now all except you my poor boy (and you are necessary to the continuance of my life) are all gone, and I am left to fulfil my task. So be it.

“October 5th—Well they are come\*; and it is all as I said. I awoke as from sleep, and thought how I had vegetated these last days; for feeling leaves little trace on the memory, if it be like mine unvaried. I had felt for and with myself alone, and I awake now to take a part in life. As far as others are concerned, my sensations have been most painful. I must work hard amidst the vexations that I perceive are preparing for me—to preserve my peace and tranquillity of mind. I must preserve some if I am to live; for since I bear at the bottom of my heart a fathomless well of bitter waters, the workings of which my philosophy is ever at work to repress, what will be my fate if the petty vexations of life are added to this sense of eternal and infinite misery?

“Oh, my child! what is your fate to be? You

alone reach me; you are the only chain that links me to time; but for you I should be free. And yet I cannot be destined to live long! Well, I shall commence my task, commemorate the virtues of the only creature worth loving or living for, and then, may be, I may join him. Moonshine may be united to her planet, and wander no more a sad reflection of all she loved on earth.

"October 7th. I have received my desk to-day, and have been reading my letters to mine own Shelley during his absences at Marlow. What a scene to recur to! My William, Clara, Allegra, are all talked of. They lived then, they breathed this air, and their voices struck on my sense; their feet trod the earth beside me, and their hands were warm with blood and life when clasped in mine. Where are they all? This is too great an agony to be written about. I may express my despair but my thoughts can find no words.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I would endeavor to consider myself a faint continuation of his being and as far as possible, the revelation to the earth of what he was. Yet to become this, I must change much, and above all I must acquire that knowledge, and drink at those fountains of wisdom and virtue, from which he quenched his thirst. Hitherto I have done nothing: yet I have not been discontented with myself. I speak of the period of

my residence here. For although unoccupied by those studies which I have marked out for myself, my mind has been so active, that its activity and not its indolence, has made me neglectful. But now the society of others causes this perpetual working of my ideas somewhat to pause; and I must take advantage of this to turn my mind, toward its immediate duties, and to determine with firmness to commence the life I have planned. You will be with me in all my studies, dearest love! Your voice will no longer applaud me but in spirit you will visit and encourage me; I know you will. What were I if I did not believe that you still exist? It is not with you as with another. I believe that we all live hereafter; but you my only one, were like a spirit caged, an elemental being enshrined in a frail image now shattered. Do they not all with one voice assert the same? Tre-lawny, Hunt, and many others; and so at last you quitted this painful prison, and you are free, my Shelley—while I, your poor chosen one, am left to live as I may.

“What a strange life mine has been! Love, youth fear, and fearlessness led me early from the regular routine of life, and I united myself to this being, who not one of us though like to us, was pursued by numberless miseries and annoyances, in all which I shared. And then I was the mother of beautiful children; but these stayed not by me. Still he was

there; and though, in truth, after my William's death, this world seemed only a quicksand sinking beneath my feet, yet beside me there was this bank of refuge—so tempest-worn and frail, that methought its very weakness was strength—and since Nature had written destruction on its brow, so the Power that rules human affairs had determined, in spite of Nature that it should endure. But that is gone. His voice can no longer be heard: the earth no longer receives the shadow of his form: annihilation has come over the earthly appearance of the most gentle creature that ever yet breathed this air; and I am still here—still thinking, existing, all but hoping. Well, I will close my book: to-morrow I must begin this new life of mine.

“October 19th.—How painful all change becomes to one who, entirely and despotically engrossed by their own feelings, leads as it were an *internal* life, quite different from the outward and apparent one. Whilst my life continues its monotonous course, within sterile banks, an undercurrent disturbs the smooth face of the waters, distorts all objects reflected in it, and the mind is no longer a mirror in which outward events may reflect themselves, but becomes itself the painter and creator. If this perpetual activity has power to vary with endless change, the every-day occurrences of a most monotonous life, it appears to be animated with the spirit of tempest and hurricane when any real

occurrence diversifies the scene. Thus, to-night, a few bars of a known air, seemed to be as a wind to rouse from its depths every deep-seated emotion of my mind. I would have given worlds to have sat, my eyes closed, and listened to them for years. The restraint I was under caused these feelings to vary with rapidity, but the words of the conversation, uninteresting as they might be, seemed all to convey two senses to me, and, touching a chord within me, to form a music of which the speaker was little aware. I do not think that any person's voice, has the same power of awakening melancholy in me as Albè's.\* I have been accustomed, when hearing it, to listen and to speak little: another voice, not mine ever replied—a voice whose strings are broken. When Albè ceases to speak, I expect to hear *that other* voice, and when I hear another instead, it jars strangely with every association. I have seen so little of Albè since our residence in Switzerland, and having seen him there every day his voice—a peculiar one—is engraved on my memory with other sounds and objects from which it can never disunite itself. I have heard Hunt in company and conversation with many, when my own one was not there. Trelawny perhaps is associated in my mind with Edward more than with Shelley. Even our older friends, Peacock and Hogg might

\* Lord Byron.

talk together, or with others, and their voices would suggest no change to me. But since incapacity and timidity always prevented my mingling in the nightly conversations of Diodati, they were, as it were, entirely tête-à-tête between my Shelley and Albè; and thus as I have said, when Albè speaks and Shelley does not answer, it is as thunder without rain—the form of the sun without heat or light—as any familiar object might be shorn of its best attributes; and I listen with an unspeakable melancholy that yet is not all pain.

“The above explains that which would otherwise be an enigma, why Albè by his mere presence and voice, has the power of exciting such deep and shifting emotions within me. For my feelings have no analogy either with my opinion of him, or the subject of his conversation. With another I might talk and not for the moment think of Shelley—at least not think of him with the same vividness as if I were alone: but when in company with Albè, I can never cease for a second to have Shelley in my heart and brain, with a clearness that mocks reality—interfering even by its force with the functions of life—until, if tears do not relieve me, the hysterical feeling, analogous to that which the murmur of the sea gives me, presses painfully upon me.

“Well, for the first time for about a month I have been in company with Albè for two hours, and, com-

ing home I write this, so necessary is it for me, to express in words the force of my feelings. Shelley, beloved! I look at the stars and at all nature, and it speaks to me of you in the clearest accents. Why cannot you answer me, my own one? Is the instrument so utterly destroyed? I would endure ages of pain to hear one tone of your voice strike on my ear.

"November 10—I have made my first probation in writing and it has done me much good; and I get more calm: the stream begins to take to its new channel, inasmuch as to make me fear change. But people must know little of me who think that, abstractedly I am content with my present mode of life. Activity of spirit is my sphere. But we cannot be active of mind without an object: and I have none. I am allowed to have some talent—that is sufficient me-thinks, to cause my irreparable misery: for if one has genius, what a delight it is to associate with a superior. Mine own Shelley! the sun knows of none to be likened to you—brave wise, gentle, noble-hearted, full of learning, tolerance and love. Love! what a word for me to write! Yet, my miserable heart, permit me yet to love—to see him in beauty, to feel him in beauty, to be interpenetrated by the sense of his excellence: and thus to love singly, eternally, ardently, and not fruitlessly: for I am still his—still the chosen one of that blessed spirit—still vowed to him forever and ever!

" November 11th—It is better to grieve than not to grieve. Grief at least tells me that I was not always what I am now. I was once selected for happiness : let the memory of that abide by me. You pass by an old ruined house in a desolate lane and heed it not. But, if you hear that that house is haunted by a wild and beautiful spirit, it acquires an interest and beauty of its own.

" I shall be glad to be more alone again : one ought to see no one, or many ; and, confined to one society I shall lose all energy, except that which I possess from my own resources ; and I must be alone for these to be put in activity.

" A cold heart ! Have I a cold heart ? God knows ! But none need envy the icy region this heart encircles ; and at least the tears are hot which the emotions of this cold heart forces me to shed. A cold heart ! Yes it would be cold enough if it were as I wished it—cold, or burning in that flame for whose sake I forgive this, and would forgive every other imputation—that flame in which your heart, beloved, lay unconsumed. My heart is very full to-night !

" I shall write his life, and thus occupy myself in the only manner from which I can derive consolation. That will be a task that may convey some balm. What though I weep ? All is better than inaction and—not forgetfulness—that never is—but an inactivity of remembrance.



"And you my own boy! I am about to begin a task, which if you live, will be an invaluable treasure to you in after times. I must collect my materials, and then in the commemoration of the divine virtues of your father, I shall fulfil the only act of pleasure there remains for me, and be ready to follow you, if you leave me, my task being fulfilled. I have lived: rapture, exultation, content,—all the varied changes of enjoyment—have been mine. It is all gone: but still, but still the airy paintings of what it has gone through float by, and distance shall not dim them. If I were alone, I had already begun what I have determined to do: but I must have patience, and for those events my memory is brass, my thoughts a never-tired engraver. France—Poverty—A few days of solitude and some uncasiness—A tranquil residence in a beautiful spot—Switzerland—Bath—Marlow—Milan—The Baths of Lucerne—Este—Venice—Rome—Naples—Rome and misery—Leghorn—Florence—Pisa—Solitude—The Williamses—The Baths—Pisa: these are the heads of chapters, and each containing a tale romantic beyond romance.

"I no longer enjoy, but I love! Death cannot deprive me of that living spark which feeds on all given it, and which is now triumphant in sorrow. I love and shall enjoy happiness again: I do not doubt that, —but when?"

With a resolute spirit Mrs. Shelley encountered all

the annoyances that her life at that time contained, and they were not a few. Nurtured as she had been in the atmosphere of broad and elevated thoughts, her mind craved the intellectual stimulus that even their outside circle of friends had given. The unbroken monotony of which she writes to Mrs. Gisborne was the bar to that healthful outward life for which she earnestly strove, and in which she recognized her true chance of cheerfulness.

“ALBENO, NEAR GENOA, Nov 22d, 1822.

“MY DEAR FRIEND, No one ever writes to me. Each day, one like the other, passes on, and if I were where I would that I were, methinks I could not be more forgotten. I cannot write myself, only to cast the shadow of my misery on others.

“What I have endured is not to be alleviated by time; for every new event and thought brings more clearly before me the fearful change. My ideas, wanting their support, fall; wanting their mate, they pine; and nothing the earth contains can alleviate that. I see no one who did not know him; and thus I try to patch up the links of a broken chain. I see consequently only the Hunts, Lord Byron, and Trelawny; but although Hunt knew him, he did not know him lately, so my freshest impressions are void for him. Lord Byron reminds me most of Shelley in a certain way, for I saw them always together; and when Lord

Byron speaks I wait for Shelley's voice in answer, as the natural result. But this feeling must wear off; and there is so little resemblance in their minds, that Lord Byron seldom speaks to me of him without unwittingly wounding and torturing me. With Trelawny I can talk, and do talk for hours unreservedly of him; but he is about to leave us and then I shall be thrown on my own mind, to seek in its frightful depths for memories and eternal sorrow.

"Pardon me that I still write in this unletterlike and incoherent manner; but I strive in vain to do better. My last letter is a proof of how I succeed; for when I curb myself to the relation of facts alone, or determine so to curb myself, I put off writing from day to day, endeavoring to catch the moment when I shall feel less. But the pen in my hand, the same spirit guides it, and one only thought swells the torrent of words that is poured out. Perhaps it would be better not to write at all, but the weakness of human nature is to seek for sympathy. I think but of one thing—my past life. While living, (do I live now?) I loved to imagine futurity, and now I strive to do the same; but I have nothing desirable to imagine save death; and my fancy flags, or sleeps, or wanders, when it endeavors to pursue other thoughts. I imagine my child dead, and what I should do then. I feel that my whole life will be one misery: it will be so—mark me!

"The Hunts are getting on well. Marianne is not better but she is not worse. We often see Trelawny of an evening. Hunt likes him very much; and for me I feel so deep a gratitude to him that my heart is full but to name him. He supported us in our miseries—my poor Jane and me. But for him menials would have performed the most sacred of offices; and when I shake his hand, I feel to the depth of my soul that those hands collected those ashes. Yes; for I saw them burned and scorched from the office. No fatigue—no sun, or nervous horrors—deterred him as one or the other of these causes deterred others. He stood on the burning sand for many hours beside the pyre; if he had been permitted by the soldiers, he would have placed him there in his arms. I never, never, can forget this; and now he talks of little else save my Shelley and Edward.

"I wish *all* MSS. to be sent without any exception, and as soon as possible. I have heard from Miss Curran. She is in Paris, and my Shelley's picture is at Rome. Nothing therefore can be done with regard to that: so pray let me have the MSS. without any delay—and let me entreat you as you love me, to wait for nothing, but the very moment the MSS. are obtained from Peacock, to send them to me. This is of more consequence to me than you think.

"I wish you would enter into an *unbreakable* engagement to me, to write to me once a month. Your

letter may be the work of several hours scattered over the month; but put a long letter into the post for me the first of every month. I want some object—some motive, great or small. I should look forward to your letter as a certain thing, and it would be something to expect. Never mind what you write about; let it be about his friends—some facts; it would be a great solace to me; indeed it would.

“Well, good-night. As usual, all are in bed except me—my restless thoughts homeless in this world, if they do not steal to the bedside of my sleeping babe; and there I tremble. But I think the new soul tries to amalgamate itself with its stubborn shrine, and if it be too finely tempered, it cannot succeed. Something earthly though good seems to announce the decision of nature. So it is with Percy. The crisis was last summer—how I trembled for him then! and now it is not reason but habit that makes me shudder.

“I hear that Peacock has given the Essay on Poetry to be published for the Liberal, and added that he had other MSS. Now I am convinced there is nothing perfect and I wish all to be sent me without delay.

“Adieu!

“Affectionately yours,

“MARY W. SHELLEY.”

a room insufficiently heated in winter?—a winter made more trying by the damp winds of a sea-coast town. Mrs. Shelley, as she writes to Miss Clairmont in the following letter, had that misery also to undergo.

“Dec. 20, 1822.

“MY DEAR CLAIRE,—I have delayed writing to you so long for two reasons. First I have every day expected to hear from you, and secondly, I wished to hear something decisive from England to communicate to you. But I have waited in vain for both these things. You do not write and I begin to despair of ever hearing from you again. A few words will tell you all that has been done in England. When I wrote to you last I think that I told you that L. B. had written to Hanson, bidding him call upon Whitton.\* Hanson wrote to Whitton desiring an interview, which W. declined requesting H. to make his application by letter; which H. has done—and I know no more. This does not look like an absolute refusal—but Sir T. is so capricious that we cannot trust to appearances. And now the chapter about myself is finished, for what can I say of my present life. The weather is bitterly cold with a sharp wind—and very unlike dear—Carissima Pisa—but soft airs and balmy gales are not the attributes of Genoa—which place I daily and duly

join Marianne in detesting. There is but one fire-place in the house—and although people have been for a month putting up a stove in my room, it smokes too much to permit of its being lighted. So I am obliged to pass the greater part of my time in Hunt's sitting-room, which is as you may guess the annihilation of study—and even of pleasure to a great degree; for after all Hunt does not like me; it is both our faults and I do not blame him, but so it is. I rise at nine, breakfast, work, read, and if I can at all endure the cold, copy my Shelley's MSS. in my own room, and if possible walk before dinner—After that I work, read Greek &c till ten, when Hunt and Marianne go to bed. Then I am alone. Then the stream of thought which has struggled against its *argine* all through the busy day, makes a *prina*, and sorrow and memory, and imagination—despair—and hope in despair are the winds and currents that impel it. I am alone and myself—And then I begin to say—as I ever feel—‘How I hate life! What a mockery it is to rise, to walk, to feed, and then go to rest, and in all this a statue might do my part. One thing alone, may or can awake me, and that is study, the rest is all nothing.’—and so it is!—I am silent and serious. Absorbed in my own thoughts—what am I then in this world, if my spirit live not to learn and to become better—that is the whole of my destiny, I look to nothing else. For I dare not look to my little

darling other than as—not the sword of Damocles—that is a wrong simile—or to a wrecked seaman's plank—true he stands, and only he between me and the sea of eternity, but I long for that plunge—no I fear for him, pain disappointment—all—all fear.

“You see how it is—It is near eleven and my good friends repose—this is the hour when I can think unobtruded upon, and these thoughts, malgrè moi will stain this paper. But then, my dear Claire, I have nothing else except my nothingless self to talk about. You have doubtless heard from Jane and I have heard from no one else. I see no one. The Guiccioli and L. B. once a month. Trelawny seldom, and he is on the eve of his departure for Leghorn. All as yet wears a tranquil appearance with regard to Gabrielle. W. is still here—and they go out nowhere. This the list of my out door acquaintances. I see no other human face.

“Marianne suffers during this dreadfully cold weather, but less than I should have supposed. The children are all well. So also is my Percy—poor little darling—they all scold him because he speaks loud a l'Italian—people love to, nay they seem to exist on finding fault with others—but I have no right to complain—and this unlucky stove is the sole source of all my *dispiacere*; if I had that, I should not tease any one, or any one me, or my only one—but after all these are trifles; I have sent for another *Eugeniére*,



and I hope before many days are elapsed, to retire as before to my hole.

"I am again delayed finishing this letter waiting for letters to England—that I might not send you one so barren of all intelligence, but I have none. And nothing new has happened, except Trelawny's departure for Leghorn, so that our days are more monotonous than ever. The weather is dreadfully cold, and an eternal northeast whistles through every crevice. Percy however is far better in this cold than in summer—he is warmly clothed—and gets on.

"Adieu. Pray write. My love to Charles. I am ashamed that I do not write to him, but I have only an old story to repeat—and this letter tells that.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARY SHELLEY."

Although Mrs. Shelley was perhaps as comfortable as possible with the Hunts, there were many drawbacks to the arrangement. Mrs. Hunt was in wretched health and, overcome by the care of her numerous small children and by bodily suffering, seemed the victim of fate in having to superintend a foreign household. Hunt was on a very precarious footing with Lord Byron in regard to the *Liberal*, and was undecided whether to return to England or to stay in Italy. He was of a most uncomfortable disposition. A mind whose very conscientiousness led to doubts and inde-

cisions made him ever changeful, often capricious. A temperament which gave to his friendship the nature of an enthusiasm, made it often uneven. He was beside, though eminently gentle, a vain man, and one whose whole life was a struggle under misfortunes; elements sufficiently disturbing in themselves to make life under the same roof one of constant vexation. They saw too few people at Genoa; but Trelawny's staunch affection cheered Mrs. Shelley. In the beginning of the new year he sent her this reassuring note:

"DEAR MARY,—of all those that I know of, or you have told me of as connected with you, there is not one now living has so tender a friendship for you as I have. I have the far greater claims on you, and I shall consider it a breach of friendship, should you employ any one else in services that I can execute.

"'My purse, my person, my extremest means  
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.'

"I hope you know my heart so well, as to make all profession needless. To serve you will ever be the greatest pleasure I can experience, and nothing could interrupt the almost unmingled pleasure I have received from our first meeting but your concealing your difficulties or wishes from me."

At the close of the year, December 31st, Mrs. Shelley thus writes in her journal: "So this year has come to an end! Shelley beloved! the year has a new name from any thou knewest. When spring arrives, leaves you never saw will shadow the ground, and flowers you never beheld, will star it; the grass will be of another growth; and the birds sing a new song; the aged earth dates with a new number.

"I trust in a hereafter—I have ever done so. I know that that shall be mine—even with thee, glorious spirit! who surely lookest on, pitiest, and lovest thy Mary.

"I love thee, my only one; I love nature; and I trust that I love all that is good in my fellow-creatures. But how changed I am! Last year, having you, I sought for the affection of others, and loved them even when unjust and cold: but now my heart is truly iced: if they treat me well, I am grateful. Yes, when that is, I call thee to witness in how warm a gush my blood flows to my heart, and tears to my eyes. But I am a lonely, unloved thing, serious and absorbed. None care to read my sorrow.

"Sometimes I thought that fortune had relented towards us—that your health would have improved, and that fame and joy would have been yours; for when well, you extracted from nature alone an endless delight. The various threads of our existence

seemed to be drawing to one point, and then to assume a cheerful hue.

"Again I think that your gentle spirit was too much wounded by the sharpness of this world; that your disease was incurable; and that in a happy time you became partaker of cloudless day, ceaseless hours, and infinite love.

"Thy name is added to the list which makes the earth bold in her age, and proud of what has been. Time, with unwearied but slow feet guides her to the goal that thou hast reached; and I her unhappy child, am advanced still nearer the hour, when my earthly dress shall repose near thine, beneath the tomb of Cestius.

"February 2nd, 1823—On the twenty-first of January those rites were fulfilled. Shelley! my own beloved! you rest beneath the blue sky of Rome; in that at least I am satisfied.

"What matters it that they cannot find the grave of my William? That spot is sanctified by the spot of his pure earthly vesture, and that is sufficient—at least it must be. I am too truly miserable, to dwell on what, at another time might have made me unhappy. He is beneath the tomb of Cestius. I see the spot.

"February 3rd—A storm has come across me—a slight circumstance has disturbed the deceitful calm of which I boasted. I thought I heard my Shelley call me—not my Shelley in Heaven—but my Shelley, my

companion in my daily tasks. I was reading; I heard a voice say, 'Mary!' 'It is Shelley,' I thought; the revulsion was of agony. Never more—

"But I have better hopes and other feelings. Your earthly shrine is shattered, but your spirit ever hovers over me, or awaits me, when I shall be worthy to join it. To that spirit, which when imprisoned here, yet showed by its exalted nature its superior derivation—"

In the following letter of Godwin the allusion made is to a proposal in which Sir Timothy offered to maintain and educate Shelley's child if its mother would relinquish all claim to it.

"SFRAND, Feb. 14, 1823.

"MY DEAR MARY,—I have this moment received a copy of Sir Timothy Shelley's letter to Lord Byron, dated Feb. 6th, and which therefore, you will see long before this reaches you. You will easily imagine how anxious I am to hear from you, and to know the state of your feelings, under this which seems like the last blow of fate.

"I need not of course, attempt to assist your judgment upon the vile proposition of taking the child from you. I am sure your feeling would never allow you to entertain such a proposition. But were it otherwise, even worldly prudence would forbid your taking such a step. While you retain the child, you are in

spite of all they can do a member of your husband's family. But the moment you give it up you appear to surrender all relationship to them, or to him. Your child is still, in case of Charles Shelley's dying before him without issue, heir to the whole estate.

"Do not I entreat you be cast down about your worldly circumstances. You certainly contain within yourself the means of subsistence. Your talents are truly extraordinary: Frankenstein is universally known and though it can never be a book for vulgar reading is everywhere respected. It is the most wonderful book to have been written at twenty years\* of age, that I ever heard of. You are now five-and-twenty. And most fortunately you have pursued a course of reading, and cultivated your mind in the manner most admirably adapted to make you a great and successful author. If you cannot be independent, who should be? Your talents as far as I can at present discern, are turned for the writing of fictitious adventures.

"If it shall ever happen to you to be placed in sudden and urgent need of a small sum, I entreat you to let me know immediately. We must see what I can do. We must help one another.

"Your affectionate father,

"WILLIAM GODWIN."

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\* It was written at eighteen, though not published till two years after.

In her journal, of February 24th, Mrs. Shelley speaks of Sir Timothy's letter with burning indignation and despair: "Evils throng around me my beloved, and I have indeed lost all in losing thee. Were it not for my child this would rather be a soothing reflection, and if starvation were my fate, I should fulfil that fate without a sigh. But our child demands all my care, now that you have left us. I must be all to him; the father, death has deprived him of; the relations, the bad world permits him not to have. What is yet in store for me? Am I to close the eyes of our boy, and then join you?"

"The last weeks have been spent in quiet. Study could not give repose to, but somewhat regulated my thoughts. I said: 'I lead an innocent life and it may become a useful one. I have talent, I will improve that talent; and if while meditating on the wisdom of ages, and storing my mind with all that has been recorded of it, any new light bursts upon me, or any discovery occurs that may be useful to my fellows, then the balm of utility may be added to innocence.'

"What is it that moves up and down in my soul and makes me feel as if my intellect could master all but my fate? I fear it is only youthful ardor—the yet untamed spirit which, wholly withdrawn from the hopes, and almost from the affections of life, indulges itself in the only walk free to it, and mental exertions being all my thoughts except regret, would make me

place my hopes in that. I am indeed, become a recluse in thought and act; and my mind turned Heavenward would, but for my only tie, lose all commune with what is around me. If I be proud, yet it is with humility that I am so. I am not vain. My heart shakes with its suppressed emotions, and I flag beneath the thoughts that possess me.

“Each day, as I have taken my solitary walk I have felt myself exalted with the idea of occupation, improvement, knowledge and peace. Looking back to my past life as a delicious dream, I steeled myself as well as I could, against such severe regrets as should overthrow my calmness. Once or twice pausing in my walk, I have exclaimed in despair—‘Is it even so?’ Yet for the most part resigned, I was occupied by reflection—on those ideas you my beloved planted in my mind—and meditated on our nature, our source, and our destination. To-day, melancholy would invade me, and I thought the peace I enjoyed was transient. Then that letter came to place its seal on my prognostications. Yet it was not the refusal, nor the insult heaped upon me, that stung me to tears. It was their bitter words about our boy. Why I live only to keep him from their hands. How dared they dream that I held him not far more precious than all, save the hope of again seeing you my lost one. But for his smiles where should I now be?

“Stars that shine unclouded, ye cannot tell me what



will be! Yet can I tell *you* a part. I have misgivings, weaknesses, and momentary relapses into unworthy despondency; but,—save in devotion towards my boy—fortune has emptied her quiver, and to all her future shafts, I oppose, courage, hopelessness of aught on this side, with a firm trust in what is beyond the grave.

“Visit me in my dreams to-night my beloved Shelley! kind loving, excellent, as thou wert! and the event of this day shall be forgotten.

“March 19th—I have until now recurred to this book, to discharge into it the overflowings of a mind too full of the bitterest waters of life, so will I to-night that I am calm put down some of my milder reveries; that, when I turn it once, I may not only find a record of the most painful thoughts, that ever filled a human heart even to distraction.

“I am beginning seriously to educate myself; and in another place I have marked the scope of this somewhat tardy education, intellectually considered. In a moral point of view, this education is of some years' standing, and it only now takes the form of seeking its food in books. I have long accustomed myself to the study of my own heart, and have sought and found in its recesses that which cannot embody itself in words—hardly in feelings. I have found strength in the conception of its faculties—much native force in the understanding of them—and what appears to me not a contemptible penetration in the

subdivisions of good and evil. But I have found less strength of self-support, of resistance to what is vulgarly called temptation; yet I think also, that I have found true humility, (for surely no one can be less presumptuous than I) an ardent love for the immutable laws of right, much native goodness of emotion, and purity of thought.

"Enough, if every day I gain a profounder knowledge of my defects, and a more certain method of turning them to a good direction.

"Study has become to me more necessary than the air I breathe. In the questioning and searching turn, it gives to my thoughts, I find some relief to wild reverie; in the self-satisfaction I feel in commanding myself, I find present solace; in the hope that thence arises, that I may become more worthy of my Shelley, I find a consolation that even makes me less wretched in my most wretched moments.

"March 30th—I have now finished part of the *Odyssey*. I mark this. I cannot write. Day after day I suffer the most tremendous agitation. I cannot write, or read, or think. Whether it be the anxiety for letters, that shakes a frame not so strong as hitherto—whether it be my annoyances here—whether it be my regrets, my sorrow and despair, or all these—I know not: but I am a wreck."

During the year that immediately followed the poet's death, Mrs. Shelley wrote this remarkable production,

called "The Choice." It was never printed during her life; indeed, it lay buried among Hunt's papers, and only a few years since was brought to light. That the feeling was omnipresent with her, that she had not always borne herself with unselfishness towards Shelley, is shown in this cry of a subdued spirit: "Not having been able to be all I should have been, I will at least bear my penance well; and not making my Shelley as happy as he deserved to be, I will at least make him happy where he is now—if he can be conscious of my constancy and patience."

"My Choice!—My Choice, alas! was had and gone  
With the red gleam of last autumnal sun;  
Lost in that deep wherein he bathed his head,  
My choice, my life, my hope together fled:—  
A wanderer here, no more I seek a home,  
The sky a vault and Italy a tomb.  
Yet as some days a pilgrim I remain,  
Linked to my orphan child by love's strong chain;  
And since I have a faith that I must earn,  
By suffering and by patience, a return  
Of that companionship and love, which first  
Upon my young life's cloud like sunlight burst,  
And now has left me, dark as when its beams,  
Quenched in the might of dreadful ocean streams,  
Leave that one cloud, a gloomy speck on high,  
Beside one star in the else darkened sky;—  
Since I must live, how would I pass the day,  
How meet with fewest tears the morning's ray,  
How sleep with calmest dreams, how find delights,  
As fire-flies gleam through interlunar nights?"

"First let me call on thee! Lost as thou art,  
Thy name aye fills my sense, thy love my heart.  
Oh, gentle Spirit! thou hast often sung,  
How fallen on evil days thy heart was wrung;  
Now fierce remorse and unreplying death  
Waken a chord within my heart, whose breath,  
Thrilling and keen, in accents audible  
A tale of unrequited love doth tell.  
It was not anger,—while thy earthly dress  
Encompassed still thy soul's rare loveliness,  
All anger was atoned by many a kind  
Caress or tear, that spoke the softened mind.—  
It speaks of cold neglect, averted eyes,  
That blindly crushed thy soul's fond sacrifice:—  
My heart was all thine own,—but yet a spell  
Closed in it's core, which seemed impenetrable,  
Till sharp-toothed misery tore the husk in twain,  
Which gaping lies, nor may unite again.\*  
Forgive me! let thy love descend in dew  
Of soft repentance and regret most true;—  
In a strange guise thou dost descend, or how  
Could love soothe the fell remorse,—as it does now?—  
By this remorse and love,—and by the years  
Through which we shared our common hopes and fears,  
By all our best companionship, I dare  
Call on thy sacred name without a fear;  
And thus I pray to thee, my friend, my Heart!  
That in thy new abode, thou'lt bear a part

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\* Mr. Buxton Forman has made this note in his priceless edition of Shelley's works: "I cannot regard this passage as indicating anything more than a natural feeling of remorse in the noble heart of a woman who has suddenly lost an idolized husband, and fancies all kinds of deficiencies in her conduct to him."

In soothing thy poor Mary's lonely pain,  
As link by link she weaves her heavy chain !—  
And thou, strange star ! ascendant at my birth,  
Which rained, they said, kind influence on the earth,  
So from great parents sprung, I dared to boast  
Fortune my friend, till set, thy beams were lost !  
And thou, Inscrutable, by whose decree  
Has burst this hideous storm of misery !  
Here let me cling, here to these solitudes,  
These myrtle-shaded streams and chesnut woods ;  
Tear me not hence—here let me live and die,  
In my adopted land—my country—Italy.

“ A happy Mother first I saw this sun,  
Beneath this sky my race of joy was run.  
First my sweet girl, whose face resembled *his*,  
Slept on bleak Lido, near Venetian seas.  
Yet still my eldest-born, my loveliest, dearest,  
Clung to my side, most joyful then when nearest.  
An English home had given this angel birth,  
Near those royal towers, where the grass-clad earth  
Is shadowed o'er by England's loftiest trees :—  
Then our companion o'er the swift-passed seas,  
He dwelt beside the Alps, or gently slept,  
Rocked by the waves, o'er which our vessel swept,  
Beside his father, nursed upon my breast,  
While Leman's waters shook with fierce unrest.  
His fairest limbs had bathed in Serchio's stream ;  
His eyes had watched Italian lightnings gleam ;  
His childish voice had, with its loudest call,  
The echoes waked of Este's castle wall ;  
Had paced Pompeii's Roman Market-place ;  
Had gazed with infant wonder on the grace  
Of stone-wrought deities, and pictured saints,  
In Rome's high palaces :—there were no taints

Of ruin on his cheek—all shadowless  
Grim death approached—the boy met his caress,  
And while his glowing limbs with life's warmth shone,  
Around those limbs his icy arms were thrown.  
His spoils were strewed beneath the soil of Rome,  
Whose flowers now star the dark earth near his tomb :  
Its airs and plants received the mortal part,  
His spirit beats within his mother's heart.  
Infant immortal ! chosen for the sky !  
No grief upon thy brow's young purity  
Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might  
The sunshine of thy smile's celestial light ;—  
The image shattered, the bright spirit fled,  
Thou shin'st the evening star among the dead.

“ And thou, his playmate,\* whose deep lucid eyes,  
Were a reflection of these bluest skies ;  
Child of our hearts, divided in ill hour,  
We could not watch the bud's expanding flower,  
Now thou art gone, one guileless victim more,  
To the black death that rules this sunny shore.

“ Companion of my griefs ! thy sinking frame  
Had often drooped, and then erect again  
With shews of health had mocked forebodings dark ;—  
Watching the changes of that quivering spark,  
I feared and hoped, and dared to trust at length,  
Thy very weakness was my tower of strength.  
Methought thou wert a spirit from the sky,  
Which struggled with it's chains, but could not die,  
And that destruction had no power to win  
From out those limbs the soul that burnt within.—  
Tell me, ye ancient walls, and weed-grown towers,  
Ye Roman airs and brightly painted flowers,

Does not his spirit visit that recess  
 Which built of love enshrines his earthly dress?—  
 —No more! no more!—what though that form be fled,  
 My trembling hand shall never write thee—dead—  
 Thou liv'st in Nature, Love, my Memory,  
 With deathless faith for aye adoring thee, }  
 The wife of Time no more, I wed Eternity. }

" 'Tis thus the Past—on which my spirit leans,  
 Makes dearest to my soul Italian scenes.  
 In Tuscan fields the winds in odours steeped  
 From flowers and cypresses, when skies have wept,  
 Shall, like the notes of music once most dear,  
 Which brings the unstrung voice upon my ear  
 Of one beloved, to memory display  
 Past scenes, past hopes, past joys, in long array.  
 Pugnano's trees, beneath whose shade he stood,  
 The pools reflecting Pisa's old pine wood,  
 The fire-flies' beams, the aziola's cry  
 All breathe his spirit which can never die.  
 Such memories have linked these hills and caves,  
 These woodland paths, and streams, and knelling waves  
 Fast to each sad pulsation of my breast,  
 And made their melancholy arms the haven of my rest.

" Here will I live, within a little dell,  
 Which but a month ago I saw full well:—  
 A dream then pictured forth the solitude  
 Deep in the shelter of a lonely wood;  
 A voice then whispered a strange prophecy,  
 My dearest, widowed friend,\* that thou and I  
 Should there together pass the weary day,  
 As we before have done in Spezia's bay,

As through long hours we watched the sails that neared  
 O'er the far sea, their vessel ne'er appeared ;  
 One pang of agony, one dying gleam  
 Of hope led us along, beside the ocean stream,  
 But keen-eyed fear, the while all hope departs,  
 Stabbed with a million stings our heart of hearts.  
 The sad revolving year has not allayed  
 The poison of those bleeding wounds, or made  
 The anguish less of that corroding thought  
 Which has with grief each single moment fraught.  
 Edward,\* thy voice was hushed—thy noble heart  
 With aspiration heaves no more—a part  
 Of heaven-resumèd past thou art become,  
 Thy spirit waits with his in our far home."

Mrs. Shelley thus writes to Mrs. Gisborne of the poet's tomb in Rome :

"ALBARO, May 3d, 1823.

"MY DEAR MRS. GISBORNE,—Your letter was very pleasing to me, since it showed me that it was not want of affection that caused your silence. Utter solitude is delightful to me, but in the midst of the waste, I am much comforted when I hear the quiet voice of friendship telling me that I am still loved by some one, and especially by those who knew my Shelley, and have been his companions. You say well that it is almost an insurmountable difficulty in expressing your thoughts, that causes you to be silent : for though occupation or indolence may often prevent your exerting



yourself, yet when you do write, yours are the best letters I receive, especially as far as clearness and information goes.

"I had a letter to-day from Trelawny at Rome, concerning the disposition of the earthly dress of my lost one. He is in the Protestant burying-ground at that place, which is beside and not before the tomb of Cestius. The old wall, with an ancient tower, bounds it on one side, and beneath this tower (a weed-grown and picturesque ruin) the excavation has been made. Trelawny has sent me a drawing of it, and he thus writes: 'Placed apart, yet in the centre, and the most conspicuous spot in the burying-ground, I have just planted six young cypresses, and four laurels, in the front of the recess which you see in the drawing, and which is caused by the projecting part of the old ruin. My own stone (Trelawny you know, one of the best and most generous of natures, is eccentric in his way), a plain slab, till I can decide upon some fitting inscription, is placed on the left hand. I have likewise dug my grave, so that when I die, there is only to lift up the coverlit and roll me into it. You may lie on the other side if you like. It is a lovely spot. The only inscription on Shelley's stone, beside the *Cor cordium* of Hunt, are three lines I have added from Shakespere:

" 'Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.'

“‘This quotation by its double meaning, alludes both to the manner of his death and his genius : and I think the element on which his soul took wing, and the subtle essence of his being mingled, may still retain him in some other shape. The water may keep the dead as the earth may and fire and air. His passionate fondness may have arisen from some sweet sympathy in his nature ; thence the fascination which so forcibly attracted him, without fear or caution to trust an element which almost all others hold in superstitious dread, and venture as cautiously on, as they would in a lair of lions.’

“This quotation is pleasing to me also, because a year ago, Trelawny came one afternoon in high spirits, with news concerning the building of the boat, saying ‘Oh, we must all embark, all live aboard ; we will all “suffer a sea change.”’ And dearest Shelley was delighted with the quotation saying that he would have it for the motto of his boat.

“Captain Roberts, (Jane will tell you who he is) is just come from Rome. He confirms all that is said in this letter. Roberts has bought the hulk of that miserable boat—new rigged her even with higher masts than before. He has sailed with her at the rate of eight knots an hour, and on such occasions tried various experiments—hazardous ones—to discover how the catastrophe that closed the scene for poor Jane and myself, happened. It is plain to every eye. She was

run down from behind. On bringing her up from fifteen fathom, all was in her—boots, telescope, ballast—lying on each side of the boat without any appearance of shifting or confusion; the topsails furled, topmast lowered; the false stern (J can explain) broken to pieces and a great hole knocked in the stern timbers. When she was brought to Leghorn every one went to see her, and the same exclamation was uttered by all: 'She was run down'—by that wretched fishing boat which owned that it had seen them.

"I have written myself into a state of agitation. If I continued my letter it would only be to pour out the bitterness of my heart. Oh, this spring is so beautiful! The clear sky shines above the calm murderer; the trees are all in leaf, and a soft air is among them; the stars tell of other spheres where I pray to be; for all this beauty, while at times it elevates me, yet in strange words tells me that he, the best and most beautiful is gone.

"Oh, follow, follow!

\* \* \* \* \*

And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,  
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire.

\* \* \* \* \*

And then,

Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,  
Were heard: 'Oh follow, follow, follow me.'

"I will finish my letter Monday. God bless you! Good night! I often see him—both he and Edward—in dreams; perhaps I shall to-night. At least, I shall not be in sleep, as I now. The clinging present is so odious.

" May 6th.

"I finish my letter. You will soon see me in England. It is not for my own desire or for my own advantage that I go, but for my boy's; so I am fixed, and enjoy these blue skies and the sight of vines and olive groves, for the last time. I hope indeed to return if only for repose. The fear of the advancing season will make me begin my journey as quickly as possible. I should in any case have feared an Italian summer for my delicate child. The climate of England will agree with him. Adieu my dear friend!

" Affectionately yours,

" MARY W. SHELLEY."

At last it was decided that she must leave Italy. Reluctantly she turned Englandward, hoping that she might soon return; but it was after long, long years of constant work and recurring annoyances and precarious health. Though her life grew calmer, she was not far wrong when she wrote to Mrs. Gisborne, "I feel that my whole life will be one misery: it will be so—mark me." This letter from her father extends a scanty welcome; but Mary Shelley ever translated her

father's words with affection, and respected the great man's vanities and whims with the utmost attention.

"NO. 195 STRAND, May 6th, 1823.

"It is certainly, my dear Mary, with great pleasure that I anticipate that we shall once again meet. It is a long, long time now since you have spent one night under my roof. You are grown a woman, have been a wife, a mother, a widow. You have realized talents which I but faintly and doubtfully anticipated. I am grown an old man, and want a child of my own to smile on and console me. When first you set your foot in London, of course I expect that it will be in this house; but the house is smaller, one floor less than the house in Skinner-street; it will do well enough for you to make shift with for a few days; but it would not do for a permanent residence. But I hope we shall at least have you near us—within a call—how different from your being on the shores of the Mediterranean.

"Your novel has sold five hundred copies—half the impression. I ought to have written to you sooner. Your letter reached me on the 18th ult.; but I have been unusually surrounded with perplexities.

"Your affectionate father,

"WM. GODWIN."

She thus writes in her journal, May 31st: "The

lanes are filled with fire-flies; they dart between the trunks of the trees and people the land with earth-stars. I walked among them to-night, and descended towards the sea. I passed by the ruined church, and stood on the platform that overlooks the beach. The black rocks were stretched out among the blue waters, which dashed with no impetuous motion against them. The dark boats with their white sails glided gently over its surface, and the star-enlightened promontories closed in the bay; below, amid the crags, I heard the monotonous, but harmonious voices of the fishermen.

"How beautiful these shores, and this sea! Such is the scene—such the waves within which my beloved vanished from mortality.

"The time is drawing near when I must quit this country. It is true that in the situation I now am, Italy is but the corpse of the enchantress that she was. Besides, if I had stayed here the state of things would have been different. The idea of our child's advantage, alone enables me to keep fixed in my resolution to return to England. It is best for him—and I go.

"Four years ago we lost our darling William, four years ago in excessive agony, I called for death to free me from all I felt that I should suffer here. I continue to live and *thou* art gone. I leave Italy, and the few that still remain to me. That I regret less; for our intercourse is [so] much checkered with all of dross that this earth so delights to blend with kindness and

sympathy, that I long for solitude, with the exercise of such affections as still remain to me. Away, I shall be conscious that these friends love me, and none can then gainsay the pure attachment which chiefly clings to them, because they knew and loved you—because I knew them when with you—and I cannot think of them without feeling your spirit beside me.

“ I cannot grieve for you my beloved Shelley! I grieve for thy friends—for the world—for thy child—most for myself enthroned in thy love, growing wiser and better, beneath thy gentle influence, taught by you the highest philosophy—your pupil, friend, lover, wife, mother of your children! The glory of the dream is gone. I am a cloud, from which the light of sunset has passed. Give me patience in the present struggle. *Meum cordium cor!* Good night!

“ ‘ I would give

All that I am to be as thou now art;

But I am chain'd to time, and cannot thence depart.’ ”

Mrs. Shelley's plans were, for the sake of her child, to avoid the heat of the Italian summer and to start for England before the excessive weather should begin. “ The day after Marianne's confinement,” she writes, “ the 9th of June, seeing all went prosperously, I told Lord Byron that I was ready to go, and he promised to provide means. When I talked of going first it was because he said I should do so, at the same time

declaring that he would regulate all himself. I waited in vain for these arrangements. But not to make a long story, he chose to transact our negotiations through Hunt, and gave such an air of unwillingness and sense of obligation he conferred, as at last provoked Hunt, to say there was no obligation since he owed me £1000. 'Glad of a quarrel straight I clap the door.' Still keeping up an appearance of amity with Hunt, he has written notes and letters so full of contempt against me and my lost Shelley, that I could stand it no longer and have refused to receive his still proffered aid for my journey. This of course delays me. I could make about £30 of my own. I do not know whether this is barely sufficient, but as the delicate constitution of my child, would oblige me to rest several times on my journey, I cannot persuade myself to commence it with what is barely necessary. I have therefore written to Trelawny for the sum required, and must wait till I hear from him."

On July 23d she writes again from Albaro, the last letter before her departure: "I have at last fixed with the vetturino. I depart on the 25th. I leave Italy. I return to the dreariest reality after having dreamed away a year in this blessed and beloved country.

"Lord Byron, Trelawny, and Pierino Gamba sailed for Greece on the 17th. I did not see the former, a remnant of shame caused him to avoid me. If he were mean, Trelawny more than balanced the moral



account. His whole conduct during his last stay here has impressed us all with an affectionate regard, and perfect faith in the unalterable goodness of his heart."

Alas! the pity that it were not so. The following letters were written at different stages during Mrs. Shelley's journey. The date of the 28th of July, of which she speaks in this letter to Hunt, was the day of Shelley's and her departure for the continent in 1814.

"CONCLUDED AT SUZA July 28, 1823.

"I was too late for the post yesterday at Turin, and too early this morning; so as I determined to put this letter in the post myself, I bring it with me to Suza, and now open it to tell you how delighted I am with my morning's ride—the scenery is so divine. The high dark Alps, just on this southern side tipt with snow, close in a plain; the meadows are full of clover and flowers, and the woods of ash, elm, and beech, descend and spread, and lose themselves in the fields; stately trees in clumps or singly arise on each side, and wherever you look you see some spot, where you dream of building a house and living forever. The exquisite beauty of nature and the cloudless sky of this summer day, soothe me and make this twenty eighth so full of recollections as to be almost pleasurable. Wherever the spirit of beauty dwells, he must be. The rustling of the trees is full of him—the waving of the tall grass—the moving shadows of

the vast hills—the blue air that penetrates their ravines, and rest upon their heights. I feel him near me when I see that which he best loved; alas, nine years ago he took me to a home in his heart, this weak being, whom he has now left for more congenial spirits and happier regions. She only lives in the hope that she may become one day as one of them.

“Absolutely, my dear Hunt, I will pass some three months in this divine spot—you shall all be with me. There are no gentlemen's seats, or palazzi, so we will take a cottage, which we will paint and refit just as this country inn is in which I now write—clean and plain. We will have no servants, only we will give out all the needlework. Marianne shall make puddings and pies, to make up for the vegetables and meat, which I shall boil and spoil. Thorny shall sweep the rooms, Mary make the beds, Johnny clean the kettles and pans, and then we will pop him into one of the many streams hereabouts and so clean him. Swiney, being so quick shall be our Mercury, Percy our gardener, Sylvan and Percy Florence our weeders, and Vincent our plaything; and then to raise us above the vulgar, we will do all our work keeping time to Hunt's symphonies; we will perform our sweepings and dustings to the march in *Alceste*; we will [go to our m]eals, to the tune of the laughing trio; and when we [are fatigued] we will lie on our turf sofas, while all [who have] voices shall [join in] chorus in *Nolle e giorno fati-*

car.' You see [that my pap]er is quite out, so I must  
say for the last time, adieu. God bless you.

"MARY W. S."

This letter, bearing the date July 30th, from St. Jean de la Maurienne, appears to have been written either to Mrs. Gisborne or to Mrs. Williams: "I told you of the departure of Lord Byron and Trelawny for Greece, the former escaping with all his crowns, and the other disbursing till he had barely £10 left. It went to my heart to borrow the sum from him necessary to make up my journey, but he behaved with so much quiet generosity, that one was almost glad to put him to the proof and witness the excellence of his heart. In this and in another trial he acquitted himself so well, that he gained all our hearts—while the other—but more when we meet.

"I left Genoa Friday 25th. Hunt and Thornton accompanied me the first twenty miles. This was much you will say from Hunt. But thank Heaven! we are now the best friends in the world. He set his heart on my quitting Italy with as comfortable feelings as possible; and he did so much that notwithstanding all the wrenching and riving such an event, joined to parting with so dear a friend, occasioned me, that I have borne up with better spirits than I could in any way have hoped. It is a delightful thing to be able to expend our affection upon an old and tried friend like

Hunt, and so passionately attached to my Shelley as he was and is. It is pleasant also to find oneself loved by one who loves him. You know somewhat of what I suffered during the winter during his alienation from me. He was displeased with me for many just reasons, but he found me willing to expiate, as far as I could, the evil I had done; his heart was again warmed and if when I return, you find me more amiable, and more willing to suffer with patience than I was, it is to him that I owe this benefit, and you may judge if I ought not to be grateful to him. I am even so to Lord Byron, who was the cause that I stayed at Genoa, and thus secured me one, who I am sure, will never change."

"SUNDAY, LYONS, August 3rd.

"MY DEAR HUNT,—I arrived at Lyons yesterday evening, and remain here until Tuesday evening; this repose will I trust, entirely restore Percy, and will give me time I hope, to receive your letter which is not yet arrived. I have taken my place in a public conveyance—not the diligence. I shall travel all Tuesday night, and the day of Wednesday, and then repose a night and a day at Dijon, then again a night and a day of travelling, the same of repose, and Sunday afternoon I arrive at Paris. This I dare say will appear to you a queer mode of proceeding, but it was the best I could manage. I could not think of travelling three successive days and nights. Vetturino

travelling is detestable from the slowness of the motion, and posting would be too expensive: but in this mode I unite swiftness, cheapness, and repose.

"I have sent you a 'Juvenal' by my vetturino, who brought me here and now returns to Italy. I sought for English books, but could find none, so I only send a 'Paul and Virginia' for Thornton. I send you also the music of the 'Clemenza di Tito'; it cost only seventeen francs, so I was tempted. I went to the music shop to buy some for you, but my ignorance both of what I ought to buy, and what you have, so puzzled me that I was glad to settle on safe ground in buying Mozart: remembering my Polly's preference, I tried to get some of Handel but there was none. You have 'Ah perdona' but I do not think that you have 'Deh prendi un dolce amplesso.' And, besides, there must be many other things in an opera of Mozart. By-the-bye, send me a list of what music you would like to have, and what you have, that if I see any cheap, I may know what I am about, and tell me also the name of that air of Handel's of which you are so fond. I do not mean, 'He was despised and rejected of men,' but the other of which you know only a few notes.

"Have you received my two letters, one *impostata* at Suza, the other at Pont Bon-voisin? They will have shown you how I got on during the first days. I look back with surprise to the tranquillity I was able

to preserve at that time ; but this is to be attributed to your kindness, my dear friend, for the idea of leaving affectionate hearts behind me, still preserves in an outward and visible form the bond which must ever exist between me and Italy. And now I turn southwards and ask, What are you doing ? If you are not a rebel against all your own diaphragmatic theories, you are taking a long walk this fine evening. And you, Marianne,—have you not been out ?

“ From the quay here that overlooks the Rhone we see Mont Blanc. This mountain is associated to me with many delightful hours ; we lived under its eye at Geneva ; and when at Lyons we looked with joy at its sublime dome. It is in itself so magnificent. The utmost heights of Cenis and the [MS. illegible] were only flecked with snow : Mont Blanc has still on its huge mantle, and its aiguilles, purer than the whitest marble pierce the heaven around it. The sight of this might have given Michael Angelo a still finer idea of a ‘ dome in the air ’ than the Pantheon itself.

“ I wonder my best friend if in other planets and systems there are other sublimer objects, and more lovely scenes to entrance Shelley with still greater delight than he felt at seeing these wondrous piles of earth’s primeval matter ; or does he only feel and see the beauties we contemplate with greater intensity ? I fear that if he could send us any of his poetry from where he now is, the world would find it more unin-

telligible and elementary than that which we have. He loved nature so enthusiastically that one is irresistibly led to imagine his painless spirit among its divinest combinations. In the society even of those he loved, I do not feel his presence so vividly, as I do when I hear the wind among the trees—when I see the shadows on the mountains, the sunshine in the ravines, or behold heaven and earth meet when she arises towards it, or the clouds descend to her. During the winter how horrible was the sound and look of the sea; but I began to love it and fancy him near it when it sparkled beneath the sun: yet after all dear Hunt, I was surprised to find that I felt his presence more vividly during my journey during the ravines of the Alps, near the roar of the water falls, and the 'inland murmur' of the precipitous rivers. How I should delight to make a tour with you among these scenes; feeling him and all about him, as you do, still you would know him better if you visited these spots which he loved better than any others in the world."

"TUESDAY, August 5th.

"I have your letter and your excuses and all. I thank you most sincerely for it. At the same time I do entreat you to take care of yourself with regard to writing, although your letters are worth infinite pleasure to me; yet that pleasure cannot be worth pain to you. And remember, if you must write, the

good hackneyed maxim of *multum in parvo*, and when your temples throb, distil the essence of three pages into three lines, and my 'fictitious adventure' will enable me to open them out and fill up intervals; not but what three pages are best—but 'you understand me.' And now let me tell you that I fear you do not rise early, since you doubt my '*ore mattutine*.' Be it known to you then, that on the journey I always rose before *three* o'clock, that I *never* once made the vetturino wait; and moreover, that there was no discontent in our jogging on, on either side, so that I half expect to be a *santa* with him. He indeed got a little out of his element when he got into France; his good-humor did not leave him, but his self-possession. He could not speak French and he walked about as if treading on eggs.

"When at Paris I will tell you more what I think of the French. They still seem miracles of quietness in comparison with Marianne's noisy friends; and the women's dresses afford the drollest contrast with those in fashion when I first set foot in Paris in 1814. Then their waists were between their shoulders, and as Hogg observed they were rather curtains than gowns. Their hair too dragged to the top of their head, and then lifted to its height, appeared as if each female wished to be a Tower of Babel in herself. Now their waists are long (not so long, however as the Genoese), and their hair flat at the top, with quantities of curls on



the temples. I remember in 1814, a Frenchman's pathetic horror at my appearance in the streets of Paris, in Oldenburg (as they were called) hats: now they all wear machines of that shape, and a high bonnet would of course be as far out of the right road, as if the earth were to take a flying leap to another system.

"After you receive this letter you must direct to me, to my father's (pray put 'W. G., Esq.,' since the want of that etiquette annoys him. I remember Shelley's unspeakable astonishment, when the author of 'Political Justice,' asked him half reproachfully, why he addressed him as 'Mr. G.')

195 Strand; and since the 21st is the day I suppose I ought to write to Florence. However when in Paris, I will calculate the time and direct accordingly. Remember Via del Fonda. I will send you the number of the house from Paris: I think it was called Palazzo Morano, or Morandi, but the number will settle that.

"Well my dear Hunt, I must not clack any more, or Marianne will think me as bad as Manin, except that you can silence me by not reading me. I hope you have taken measures, that Mrs. Mason shall have 'Valperga,' as you write a criticism of it. If ever I write another novel, it will be better worth your criticism and more pleasing to you than this. After all 'Valperga' is merely a book of promise; another landing-place in the staircase I am climbing. I often

think of Alfred of Triamond. You must send me the list of books I must consult for it.

"I hope Marianne thinks of me with kindness, and that the children remember me. Percy was playing at playing with Henry all day yesterday, and generously gave the shadow all his playthings. How are Polly's nerves, and the bell and the empty house, and how goes on the jacket? *The* jacket with the definite article. Has Henry yet profaned it with fruit soiled hands? God bless you all, and bless you dear Hunt, for all the good you have done me, do me, and are about to do.

"Faithfully yours,

"MARY W. SHELLEY."

This letter appears to have been written to Mrs. Gisborne :

"PARIS, Aug. 13, 1823.

"I have three good friends in the world, and ought to be content. I have you—you, I trust love me. I have Hunt, who with his characteristic enthusiasm, has me now as much at heart, as I was away from it a little while ago. And I have Trelawny, by whose aid I made up the money sufficient to come to England. And when I tell you all of him that I can, in addition to what you know already, you will have admiration for the rough outside with the gentle heart."

## CHAPTER VII.

### "FRANKENSTEIN," AND OTHER WRITINGS.

THE published books of an author bear no necessary relation to his literary work, still less are they a gauge of his intellectual life. The faculty for literary production is something apart, often possessed by those who have little worth producing, denied to those who die—as galleons sink—carrying their golden wealth with them. Of no one is this more true than of Mrs. Shelley. Her literary productions were few and disproportionate to her intellectual force; disappointing when viewed side by side with her peculiar gift of evoking the most artistic literary work in others. Her published writings comprise, "Frankenstein," in 1818; "Valperga," 1823; "The Last Man," 1824; "Perkin Warbeck," 1830; "Lodore," 1835; and "Falkner," 1837; the Italian and Spanish lives in "Lardner's Encyclopedia," with the exception of "Tasso" and "Galileo." She published also Shelley's prose works, his poems, with valuable notes, two volumes of travels, "Rambles in Germany and Italy," besides contributing to the magazines.

Of Mrs. Shelley's writings, "Frankenstein" is with-

out question the most noteworthy. From the day of its first appearance in print down to the present, it has had accorded to it a position as a unique and remarkable production. This reputation, gained equally from two classes who rarely agree in reading the same book, still less in praising it—thoughtful *littérateurs* and mere readers of stories,—it has steadily maintained. This fact of itself is doubtless due to, and in a measure significant of, the dual character of the romance. It is one of the few books that can be called *sui generis*. The advent of such books into the literary world is always a subject of interest. And the wonder is not lessened when we are told that this book was the production of a girl of eighteen, and her first attempt at sustained literary work. Allusion has already been made to the period of Mrs. Shelley's life in which "Frankenstein" was written, but in order to gain a critical comprehension of the work, the details of its production are of the highest interest.

During the summer of 1816, while the Shelleys were neighbors of Lord Byron, on the borders of Lake Geneva, the intercourse between the two poets and their households was daily and intimate. Byron was at that time composing the third canto of "Childe Harold," and as each successive scene was finished he brought his work to his poet neighbor, who thus partook of the first fruits of a genius he was so well adapted to recognize and value. Moreover, the pro-

longed rains keeping them in-doors, they chanced to find some volumes of fiction,—principally ghost stories and fantastic fairy tales translated from the French and German. The drift of much of their talk tended into the atmosphere of the supernatural and horrible.

It is worthy of passing note that many of these stories were of a strictly allegorical type. Thus one was the history of the inconstant lover, who having deserted his betrothed when most he should have befriended her, chose a bride, and clasped her to his arms only to find himself embracing the pale ghost of his deserted. Another story was of a parent who by crime bestowed life upon a race and was doomed to give the kiss of death to all the sons of his ill-fated house, just as they in turn reached the age of promise.

While under the influence of these fantastic tales and the impromptu ones which they told each other, the agreement was made that each should write a ghost story. The proposition was Byron's; it was accorded to and entered upon by all. The poets themselves failed, and it is more than probable that the persistence of Mrs. Shelley was due rather to the wishes and urgency of Shelley than to any innate energy or will of her own in the matter. He, from the time of their first acquaintance, had been anxious that she should attempt literary work of some kind, partly because of his faith in the theory of heredity, and partly from a confidence in his own estimate of her mental

qualities. He believed that the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, the woman whose mental brightness and spirit had for himself a never-failing endurance, could not but be remarkable in any literary work to which she might turn her mind.

Mrs. Shelley herself, in the preface of the last London edition of "Frankenstein," published during her life, has told how she tried day after day to think of a plot; to invent something uncanny or horribly fantastic, and how each morning, to the question, "Have you thought of a story?" she was obliged to answer "No," until a train of thought supplied by conversation of a metaphysical tone which she had listened to between Shelley and Byron, entered into her state of reverie in semi-sleep, and suggested the essential outlines of the plot of "Frankenstein."

What was thus suggested was probably nothing more than the central figures of the weird conception. Nothing could be simpler than the plot, nothing more horrible than the situations and the details. Frankenstein is a student who, by the study of occult sciences, acquires the power of imparting life to a figure which he had made. Graves and charnel-house had furnished the needed material from which he had constructed this colossal human form. To the thing thus prepared he is able to impart life. It lives and possesses human attributes. The rest of the tale is occupied in depicting the nameless horrors which vis-

ited Frankenstein as the result of his creation. The thing becomes the bane of his life. He tries to fly from it, but there is no final escape. One by one, the monster that he had created slays the brother, friend, sister, and bride of the luckless student, who himself finally falls a victim to his own wretched and untoward creation. The monster, upon its part, strives to adapt itself to life, but fails; finds no possibility of companionship, no admission into any human fellowship.

Such in brief outline is the plot, if it can be so called, of the tale which, with eager hands, the youthful romancer penned before the first horror of the idea had faded from her brain. At Shelley's suggestion the story was amplified. The introductory letters were inserted and the pastoral episode and other incidents were added to the later part of the narrative. As originally written the story began with the words, "It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils." In the work as published these words introduce Chapter IV.

Regarded as a mere tale, it is difficult to account for the hold this story has always had upon the minds of the reading world. As a story it does not justify its own success. To say that it is remarkable as a work of imagination does not meet the difficulty. By a work of the imagination, as used in the current criticism of "*Frankenstein*," is simply meant that it is

a fantastic romance, such as we find in the "Arabian Nights," or in the prose tales of Poe. But a position utterly different from these is accorded to "Frankenstein."

We have intimated that there was a dual quality in it, to which it owed its singular power and place in literature. One element is doubtless the horror of the tale and the weird fancy of the author's imagination in the ordinary acceptation of the word. But it is to an entirely different department of mental conception that we must look for the secret of its peculiar influence. The faculty of imagination is something more than the recalling and rearrangements of past impressions. Profoundly considered, it is that function of the mind which formulates, as though real, a state of things which if present would so appear. It is the power of projecting the mind into unhappened realities. It is the faculty of picturing unseen verities. There is thus in it a prophetic element, not at all miraculous, but dependent upon subtle laws of association and suggestion. It is to this element that "Frankenstein" owes its power over thoughtful minds. It is by virtue of the allegorical element in it that it holds its high position as a work of the imagination. Yet so unobtrusively is the allegory woven through the thread of the romance, that, while always felt, it can scarcely be said to have been detected. Certain it is that no one has directed attention to this phase, or



carefully attempted an analysis of the work, with the view of deducing the meaning thus legible between the lines.

That Mrs. Shelley herself was conscious of this element is certain, by the double title she gave it,—“Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus.” Furthermore, ~~that she~~ should thus embody, under the apparent guise of a weird story, suggestions of moral truths, development of mental traits,—normal and abnormal,—and hints at, and solutions of, social questions, was in strict accord both with her own intellectual state and with the circumstances under which “Frankenstein” was produced. And yet nothing is more improbable than that it was written with such design, or that the youthful author was fully aware or even conscious of the extent to which the allegorical overlies largely the narrative in her work. This very unconsciousness of result, this obliviousness to hidden truths, is a distinguishing mark of genius. To take daily account of stock proclaims the small trader, not the merchant prince. Placed in a congenial atmosphere, genius in breathing the breath of life will exhale truths. The very gist of genius is embodied in this hidden relation to truth. That mind has genius which, detecting germs of truth under forms where the common eye sees them not, affords in itself the place and pabulum for their growth.

We know the circumstance under which the book

was written; the stories which suggested it were all weird in form and allegorical in type; the minds of those by whom Mrs. Shelley was at that time surrounded were minds to whom the mystical was the natural mode of thought and speech. Her own inherited and acquired mental traits were markedly of this same character. Furthermore, at this time the influence of Shelley was strongest upon her. Not that of one nature mastering and overpowering a weaker, but that yet stronger bond of one mind fitted by nature and oneness of motive to gain insight into, and be in unison with, the other.

Such, in a remarkable degree, was her relation at this time to Shelley; to her his nature was revealed. They had spoken and dwelt upon his past until it was an open book to her. His aims and his failures, his aspirations and fears, his nature and philosophy were familiar and ever present to her mind. Moreover, from him she had learned much about the great world of men and things, broadening her nature and conceptions beyond the ordinary limit of feminine knowledge; indeed, with the result of attaching her own peculiar insight to the facts and ideas thus included within her extending horizon. In both of their minds the tendency to dwell on social and ethical problems was strong, and to such natures union means cubic strength. What wonder that, if, underlying her story thus produced, should lie partly concealed or vaguely

hinted, **social** and moral ideas, awaiting but recognition, to **become** in turn the suggestors of their own redevelopment in the minds of us who read.

That **some**, nay, many, of these have an almost direct bearing upon Shelley himself, either as proceeding from him or pointing to him, is to be expected; to say that they all thus have would be perhaps straining a theory otherwise tenable. What we can safely affirm is that he who, with this idea of the allegorical substratum, will reread the story, will be richly repaid in the suggestions the mind cannot fail to receive, and which, according to the mind of each, will attach to the **nature** of Shelley himself, or, more widely taken, will stand as general truths, applicable alike to all.

Such a **general** truth is that pictured in the character and pursuit **of** the student Frankenstein himself. He exhibits to **us** the man of one idea, absorbed in but one department of science, not only abandoning other studies, but **rejecting** the ordinary avocations of life. Family, friend, even the voice of her who loved him, fails to recall him to action or to a sense of the proper proportion **of** things. We see the result not only in the loss of **symmetry** and balance in his character, but find it having its legitimate effect in making him the slave of his **own** too concentrated studies. So that finally he becomes possessed by the ruling idea he had so dearly cherished, and the reward of his infatuation is the delusion that he can accomplish that which a

healthful mind would have avoided,—a delusion which had grown up in the very seclusion and isolation of life that the unhappy student had adopted; to which the fitting antidote would have been the diversion of the commonplace interests which he had carefully excluded. The power to produce the horrible creature, as the fruit of this delusion, is but the poetic justice of his sentence. The terrible result of his creation furnishes the morale and teaching of the allegory. Into this part of the story is interposed the train of thought which is suggested by the construction of the human form by Frankenstein. In its preparation the student selects the most beautiful models for each limb and feature. He spares no pains, and each separate anatomical part is, taken by itself, perfect in symmetry and adaptation. But when once the breath of life is breathed into the creation, and life quickens its being and gleams from its eyes, and function succeeds in the hitherto inanimate parts, all beauty disappears; the separate excellence of each several part is lost in the general incongruity and lack of harmony of the whole.

Can art see no suggestiveness in this? Can society, in its attempt to manufacture conglomerate masses out of dissimilar elements, learn nothing from the teaching here inculcated?

Once become a living being, Frankenstein and this monster that he had made bear to one another the

sustained relation of creator and creature. Throughout the entire narrative this relationship is one long allegory with phases as diverse as a prism. Most prominent is the total failure to create that which should find place in life only by growth. In the sad, lone, utter incompatibility which environed the creature,—in the inability of others to accept or tolerate it,—in its own desperate, heart-sickening attempts to educate and train itself into harmony and communion with those who should have been its fellow-beings, and in its final despair and terrible outlawry and revenge, is shown the futility of the attempt to regulate human beings or their concerns, except under the laws of growth and development. And "*Frankenstein*" contains no deeper teaching than that we cannot legislate happiness into this world; that such attempt at last, after affording a maximum of misery, returns to plague the inventor.

Another phase of this relationship between the creator and his creature is so strongly suggestive of a certain period of Shelley's religious life that the mind hesitates before denying the likeness. The creature of *Frankenstein*, finding itself in a world in which all happiness is denied it; to which its powers of strengthfulness, however exercised, bring it no good, but serve only to increase its misery and sense of loneliness, turns to its creator and, with alternate curses and prayers, beseeches him to either slay it or fit the

world for its companionship. In this dilemma the creator does neither. He merely admits either his unwillingness or his inability to do that which simple justice to his creature, to say nothing of his love and duty, would prompt. Thus the creator is made to figure as lacking either justice or omnipotence.

How Shelleyan this idea, the closest student of him will best judge.

But the chief allegorical interest in the narrative concerns itself about that tendency in the human being to discard the established order of things and to create for itself a new and independent existence. In the simple story, Frankenstein made a being responsible to him alone for its creation,—a being not produced by the ordinary course of life, not amenable or even adaptable to the existing world of men. Right or wrong, better or worse, the creature may be, but different certainly, and this irreconcilable disparity points back ever to its origin, which had been anomalous and strange.

The whole story is but the elaboration of the embarrassment and dangers which flow from departure from the ordinary course of nature; this forced attempt to invade society from within. What strong existence in real life of this same tendency Mary Shelley had seen in those nearest and dearest to her! She has not failed to learn the lesson of her mother's history; time analyzes rather than destroys. And the

life of **Mary** Wollstonecraft was doubtless seen by the clear-minded daughter in stronger contrast of light and shade than it had been by its contemporaries. Who knew so well the glories of that life? Its successes as well as its miseries had sprung from the self-same causes as those of *Frankenstein*,—from the breach of the conventional; from overstepping the limits; from creating an individuality and a sphere of existence denied it by *Nomos*, and consequently sure of the hostility of society.

To this same cause Shelley himself attributed justly the events and moral struggle of his own life. From earliest childhood revolt against convention, and rebellion against authority, had characterized him. His perpetual tendency, like that of *Mary Wollstonecraft*, like that typified in "*Frankenstein*," was ever to create for himself an existence not conforming to the ways of the world.

As we read the story of the modern Prometheus, and page by page trace the evolution of this idea, the ethical aspect is oppressive in its prophetic truth. Each must do this for himself. One thing, however, we may note. The visitation of judgment, the terrible results of the exercise of the power of creation, do not begin, do not recoil upon *Frankenstein*, until he has actually launched his creature into the world of men about him. So long as he kept the scheme within himself; ~~so long~~ as the influence of the thought and

work was confined to him alone, no evil came; on the contrary, after a certain point the struggle after this ideal was a stimulation and an incentive of the highest order. It was only when the overt act of introducing his new existence into the world was accomplished, that misery began to flow from it to all concerned, and even to those apparently not concerned in it. This is the saving clause in the prophetic allegory. Without this it would fail to square with the truth.

See how far-reaching are the ideas which this allegory evokes, how subtle its suggestions are. Mind after mind has felt the power of this story, so simple in its apparent construction, and has again and again returned to it, not asking itself why; feeling a power it did not recognize, much less analyze; hovering, in fact, around it as birds do when charmed, because of an attraction which was persistent and real, although unknown, even unsuspected. All attraction implies some sort of a magnet. Nothing attracts so powerfully as the true.

The world, by its acknowledgment of the coercive quality of "Frankenstein," has given silent acceptance of its genius. The other works, novels, critiques, biographies, while they have had literary merit, feeling, even power, have not shown genius. "Frankenstein" alone was personal, it alone reflected Mrs. Shelley's true self. Her other books contain simply



what she wrote in them: this alone contains what was written in her. Being, as she was, stronger in her personality than as a literary artist, the book that alone partook of that personality would alone partake of her peculiar genius. This, considered in its fullest light, "*Frankenstein*" does.

It is a thankless task to sit in judgment upon a novel like "*Valperga*," and only the difficulty of obtaining the work and the curiosity to know Mrs. Shelley's most serious endeavor at romance, justify the extended extracts which follow. Formed upon the old-fashioned models, it, like them, essentially lacks action, incident, and dramatic expression. It is unrelieved by nicely-drawn character sketches. It so abounds in long and learned speeches, dull descriptions, lifeless records of events, that to our highly exacting modern mind, as a novel, it is a complete failure. But it is not as a novel that the book ought to be judged. As an illustration of its author's mental and moral development it has a place and a purpose. For although she has a certain sympathetic insight into the imaginative, the emotional; although she delights in the deeply tragical,—page follows page of unmitigated melancholy,—it is totally without the light and shade which would make us feel the pathos of the story intensely. Indeed, one could not call it pathetic; it is simply tragical.

Not an emotion of pity visits you while you read;

not a spark of enthusiasm, not an impulse of sympathy. Its people are as dead to you as they have been these hundreds of years to the world. One reads the three volumes stolidly, unmoved ; interested only because of the insight which one gains of its author.

Castruccio, Prince of Lucca, the tyrant, the caustic wit of history, the first soldier and satirist of his age, moves laboriously through the book. His ambitions do not penetrate, his villanies do not touch one. He is a thing without life, without passion ; the events of his career are dull-recorded facts. Mrs. Shelley has not done justice to his keen and crafty generalship, to his trenchant and powerful satire. You do not get a glimpse of the man of history, who, when he was dying in the zenith of his glory, said, " Lay me on my face in the coffin, for everything will be reversed ere long after my departure ;" or who rebuked a young man whom he met coming out of a house of ill repute, and who blushed at seeing Castruccio,— " It was when you went in that you should have colored, not when you come out." Again, when in a storm Castruccio was alarmed, a stupid fool derided, saying he had no fear, as he did not value his own life at a farthing. " Everybody," said Castruccio, " makes the best estimate of his own wares." When a sage rebuked Castruccio for some extravagances at an evening revelry, he replied, " He who is held as a wise man by day, will not be taken to be a fool by night."

And again, on remarking the radiant countenance of an envious man, he exclaimed, "Is it that some good hath befallen thee, or that some evil hath befallen another?"

What Mrs. Shelley tried to do—and this, I take it, to be the motive of the book—was to show how from a generous, deep-souled, guileless youth, Castruccio became a cruel, ambitious tyrant, a being deaf to all the appeals of mercy or justice. She has given us an account of his exiled youth, its innocent occupations, its gentle and ennobling influences, its dreams of power and glory for his oppressed native city, Lucca. She has told how, after an apprenticeship spent in the English Court of Edward the Second, in the wars of Flanders, and in the atmosphere of intriguing European countries, he appears as the liberator of his native city; how, after destroying the Guelphic rule by banishing three hundred Guelph families, his idea of liberty was to reinstate the Ghibellines, of which he, the last heir of the noble Antiminelli family, was the head; how, moderate in all his habits and wants, he was yet insatiable in his ambition. Liberty for his country being only the ruse to conceal his greed for power and autocracy.

She has shown how the pure and elevated nature of Euthanasia, his betrothed bride, whose ideal love for him was only equalled by her desire for peace and freedom for her distracted Italy, was as naught to

hinder the evil development of his own mind; how the terrible misfortunes of the inspired and misled Beatrice brought no serious regret to him, the careless cause of her misery. It is true that she has shown us all this, but we stand as upon the outer wall, viewing the conflict through the obscurations of the dust and confusion. We fail to discern there the great soldier, the real Castruccio.

The characters of the two women, Euthanasia, Countess of Valperga, and Beatrice, Prophetess of Ferrara, are drawn with more vigor. The intimate workings of their souls are laid bare to us; the deep melancholy of their lives is portrayed with all the detail of one gifted in such analysis. We are reminded of Romola in the story of Euthanasia's life. Nearly two hundred years earlier, in an old library in the same city of Florence, Euthanasia, like Romola, spent her young life reading dull, musty parchments to her blind father, and her after life was not unlike Romola's in its moral conflicts.

In the young Euthanasia, as she sat at her father's feet and drank eagerly his eloquent rhapsodies on the Latin poets, Mrs. Shelley unconsciously describes herself. She says of her heroine, "Her soul was adapted for the reception of all good." Her own education under Shelley's guidance was not unlike that of the child Euthanasia, who from love mastered with amazing skill the difficult Latin transcriptions on

the old parchments, that she might read them to her father, for Shelley writes of Mary's progress in Latin shortly after their marriage,—“She has satisfied my best expectations.” Many qualities of heart and mind attributed to Euthanasia or Beatrice, one recognizes as but the unconscious portrayal of her own nature. Euthanasia grows up as a Guelph and a Florentine, holding sacred the friendship of the noble-hearted Castruccio, who had been her knight and playmate before his exile. One by one, her father, mother, brothers die, and she is left the last survivor of her family. After Castruccio's return to Italy they renew their vows and are betrothed; but it is now that she sees with despair the seeds of evil in her lover's character which finally divide them. The conflict between Euthanasia's love for Castruccio and her hatred of tyranny and bloodshed is perhaps the chief interest of the romance.

But it is the character of Beatrice—a character fraught with passion and madness—which displays the peculiar power of Mrs. Shelley's imagination; the power of realizing and dealing with the terrible. Like Frankenstein, Beatrice is the result of an abnormal and one-sided development. Like him, she creates for herself a strange and unnatural state of existence. Like him, she suffers the fatal consequence of an intense absorption to one idea,—the idea of her divine inspiration. Here again does the dual tendency of

Mrs. Shelley's mind show itself. Beatrice is the outgrowth of all the religious frenzies and persecutions of the age; her prophetic dreams and enthusiasms are the wild and morbid development of a highly overstrung and unbalanced mind, encouraged by the superstitious reverence of her countrymen and friends and her own credulous belief in her divine inspirations. Her final awakening, her realization of the deception under which she has lived, her love for Castruccio, her pilgrimage to Rome, her abhorrence of the religion in which she had been nurtured, and which had made her fanaticism possible, her despair of truth or humanity, her final madness, are all highly dramatic possibilities, had Mrs. Shelley but let the simple truths speak for themselves; but she so dissipates the strength of her situations by long and tedious sentences and dull narrations that you feel like one who, walking over endless stretch of plain, longs for broken country.

The tone of the book is pure and high. There is in it the intense earnestness that actuated Mary Shelley throughout her life. There are careful and laborious details of manners and customs; long and erudite speeches, religious and political; a conscientious study of Italy and her internal strife. The flowing eloquence and rhapsodies of the imaginative Beatrice are well sustained; the unswerving truth and nobility of Euthanasia's character are drawn with ten-

derness and appreciation. But the book will not stand the test of a good novel; its characters do not remain in your mind like the memories of real people. They are passionless and lifeless.

It is only Beatrice, the adopted daughter of the good Bishop of Ferrara, who now and then breaks the austere monotony of the book. The description of her love for Castruccio, who had come to her city and was entertained by the bishop as the prince and liberator of his country, is well worth quoting.

"Thus many hours passed, and when at length the prophetess retired, it was to feverish meditation and thoughts burning with passion, rendered still more dangerous from her belief in the divine nature of all that suggested itself to her mind. She prayed to the Virgin to inspire her; and, again giving herself up to reverie, she wove a subtle web, whose materials she believed heavenly, but which were indeed stolen from the glowing wings of love. Kneeling, her eyes raised to heaven, she felt the same commotion, in her soul, which she had felt before, and had recognized as divine inspiration; she felt the same uncontrollable transport and burst of imaginative vision, which she believed to flow immediately from the invisible ray of heaven-derived prophecy. She felt her soul, as it were, fade away, and incorporate itself with another and a divine spirit, which whispered truth and knowledge to her mind, and then slowly receding, left her

human nature, agitated, joyful, and exhausted ;—these were her dreams,—alas ! to her they were realities."

Beatrice, believing in what she considered the commands of a divine inspiration, invites Castruccio to her apartments.

"Castruccio came. If it were in human virtue to resist the invitation of this angelic girl, his was not the mind, strictly disciplined to right, self-examining and jealous of its own integrity, that should thus weigh its actions, and move only as approved by conscience. He was frank and noble in his manner ; his nature was generous ; and, though there lurked in his heart the germ of an evil-bearing tree, it was as yet undeveloped and inanimated ; and, in obeying the summons of Beatrice, he passively gave himself up to the strong excitements of curiosity and wonder.

"He went again and again. When the silent night was spread over everything, and the walls of the town stood black and confused amidst the overshadowing trees, whose waving foliage was diversified by no gleam of light, but all was formless as the undistinguishable air ; or if a star were dimly seen it just glistened on the waters of the marsh, and then swiftly the heavy web of clouds hid both star and water ; when the watch-dogs were mute, unawakened by the moon, and the wind that blew across the plain alone told the ear the place of the trees ; when the bats and the owls were lulled by the exceeding darkness, it was on such



nights as these, that Castruccio sought the secret entrance of the viscountess's palace, and was received by the beautiful Beatrice, enshrined in an atmosphere of love and joy.

"She was a strange riddle to him. Without vow, without even that slight shew of distrust which is the child of confidence itself; without seeking the responsive professions of eternal love, she surrendered herself to his arms. And, when the first maiden bashfulness had passed away, all was deep tenderness and ardent love. Yet there was a dignity and a trusting affection in her most unguarded moments, that staggered him; a broken expression would sometimes fall from her lips, that seemed to say she believed him indissolubly hers, which made him start, as if he feared that he had acted with perfidy; yet he had never solicited, never promised,—what could she mean? What was she? He loved her as he would have loved anything that was surpassingly beautiful; and, when these expressions, that intimated somewhat of enduring and unchanging intercourse, intruded themselves, they pained and irritated him: he turned to the recollection of *Euthanasia*, his pure, his high-minded and *truth-plight bride*;—she seemed as if wronged by such an idea; and yet he hardly dared think her purer than poor Beatrice, whose soul, though given up to love, was imbued in its very grain and texture with delicate affections and honourable feelings; all that makes the

soul and living spark of viture. If she had not resisted the impulses of her soul, it was not that she wanted the power; but that, deluded by the net of conceit that had so long wound itself about her, she believed them, not only lawful, but inspired by the special interposition of heaven.

"Poor Beatrice! she had inherited from her mother the most ardent imagination that ever animated a human soul. Its images were as vivid as reality, and were so overpowering, that they appeared to her, when she compared them to the calm sensations of others, as something superhuman; and she followed that as a guide, which she ought to have bound with fetters, and to have curbed and crushed by every effort of reason. Unhappy prophetess! the superstitions of her times had obtained credit for, and indeed given birth to her pretensions, and the compassion and humanity of her fellow-creatures, had stamped them with the truth-attesting seal of a miracle. There is so much life in love! Beatrice was hardly seventeen, and she loved for the first time; and all the exquisite pleasures of that passion were consecrated to her, by a mysteriousness and delusive sanctity that gave them tenfold zest. It is said, that in love we idolize the object; and, placing him apart and selecting him from his fellows, look on him as superior in nature to all others. We do so; but, even as we idolize the object of our affections, do we idolize ourselves; if we separate him

from his fellow-mortals, so do we separate ourselves, and, glorying in belonging to him alone, feel lifted above all other sensations, all other joys and griefs, to one hallowed circle from which all but his ideal is banished; we walk as if a mist or some more potent charm divided us from all but him; a sanctified victim which none but the priest set apart for that office could touch and not pollute, enshrined in a cloud of glory, made glorious through beauties not our own. Thus we all feel during the entrancing dream of love; and Beatrice, the ardent, affectionate Beatrice, felt this with multiplied power; and, believing that none had ever felt so before, she thought that heaven itself had interfered to produce so true a paradise. If her childish dreams had been full of fire, how much more vivid and overpowering was the awaking of her soul when she first loved! It seemed as if some new and wondrous spirit had descended, alive, breathing and panting, into her colder heart, and gave it a new impulse, a new existence. Ever the dupe of her undisciplined thoughts, she cherished her reveries, believing that heavenly and intellectual, which was indebted for its force to earthly mixtures; and she resigned herself entirely to her visionary joys, until she finally awoke to truth, fallen, and forever lost.

"In the meantime peace was entirely restored to Ferrara; and on the fifteenth of August Castel Tealdo surrendered, and the Pope's governor, with his foreign

guard, quitted the territories of the marquess of Este. Gallazzo Visconti returned to Milan, but still Castruccio lingered: he wished to go; he found himself out of place as a dangling courtier in the train of Obizzo; but how could he leave Beatrice? What did she expect or wish? The passionate tenderness that she evinced, could not be an ephemeral spark of worthless love; and how often did the *We*, she used in talking of futurity, make him pause when he wished to speak of their separation! She seemed happy; her words flowed in rich abundance, and were adorned with various imagery and delicate thoughts, showing that her soul, at rest from fear, wandered as it was wont amidst the wilds of her imagination. He found her untaught, undisciplined, but so sincere, so utterly forgetful of self, so trusting, that he dared not speak that, which each day showed more clearly would be as a dagger to her heart. A thousand times he cursed himself for having mistaken her, and imagining, inspired as she believed herself to be, that her actions and feelings had not been dictated by the loftiest impulses. But the time arrived, when he was obliged to undeceive her; and the hand, that tore away the ties her trusting heart had bound round itself, at the same time tore away the vail which had for her invested all nature, and showed her life as it was—naked and appalling.

"They sat in her apartment at the Malvezzi palace;

she radiant, beautiful, and happy; and, twining her lovely arms around Castruccio, she said; 'The moon will set late to-morrow night, and you must not venture here; and indeed for several nights it will spread too glaring a beam. But tell me, are you become a citizen of Ferrara? They averred that you were the head of a noble city; but I see they must have been mistaken, or the poor city must totter strangely, so headless as your absence must make it. How is this my only friend? Are you not Antelminelli? Are we not to go to Lucca?'

"Castruccio could not stand the questioning of her soft yet earnest eyes; he withdrew himself from her arms, and taking her hands in his, kissed them silently.

"'How is my noble lord?' she repeated, 'have you had ill news? Are you again banished? that cannot be, or methinks my heart would have told me the secret. Yet, if you are, be not unhappy:—your own Beatrice, with prophetic words, and signs from heaven that lead the multitude, will conduct you to greater glory and greater power than you before possessed. My gentle love, you have talked less about yourself, and about your hopes and desires, than I should have wished:—Do not think me a foolish woman, tied to an embroidery frame, or that my heart would not beat high at the news of your success, or that with my whole soul I should not enter into your plans, and tell you

how the stars looked upon your interests. In truth, my mind pants for fitting exertion, and, in being joined to thee, dearest love, I thought that I had found the goal for which heaven had destined me. Nay look not away from me; I do not reproach thee, I know that in finding thee, in being bound to thy fate, mine is fulfilled; and I am happy. Now speak—tell me what has disturbed thy thoughts.'

"'Sweetest Beatrice, I have nothing to tell; yet I have for many days wished to speak; for in truth I must return to Lucca.'

The quick sensations of Beatrice could not be deceived. The words of Castruccio were too plain; she looked at him, as if she would read the secret in his soul,—she did read it:—his downcast eyes, confused air, and the words he stammered out in explanation, told her everything. The blood rushed to her face, her neck, her hands; and then as suddenly receding, left even her lips pale. She withdrew her arms from the soft caress she had bestowed; playfully she had bound his head with her own hair and the silken strings entangled with his; she tore her tresses impatiently to disengage herself from him; then, trembling, white, and chilled, she sat down, and said not a word. Castruccio looked on with fear, he attempted consolation.

"'I shall visit thee again, my own Beatrice; for a time we must part;—the viscountess, the good bishop

—you cannot leave them,—fear not but that we shall meet again.'

"‘We shall meet again!’ she exclaimed with a passionate voice; ‘Never!’

"Her tone, full of agitation and grief, sunk into the soul of Castruccio. He took her hand; it was lifeless; he would have kissed her; but she drew back coldly and sadly. His words had not been those of the heart; he had hesitated and paused; but now compassion, and the memory of what she had been, awoke his powers, and he said warmly, and with a voice whose modulation seemed tuned by love: ‘You mistake me, Beatrice; indeed you do. I love you;—who could help loving one so true, so gentle, and so trusting?—We part for a while;—this is necessary. Does not your character require it? The part you act in the world? every consideration of honor and delicacy?—Do you think that I can ever forget you? does not your own heart tell you, that your love, your caresses, your sweet eyes, and gentle words have woven a net which must keep me forever? You will remain here, and I shall go; but a few suns, a few moons, and we shall meet again, and the joy of that moment will make you forget our transient separation.’

"How cold were these words to the burning heart of the prophetess; she, who thought that Heaven had singled out Castruccio to unite him to her, who

thought that the Holy Spirit had revealed himself to bless their union, that, by the mingled strength of his manly qualities, and her divine attributes, some great work might be fulfilled on earth; who saw all as God's command, and done by his special interposition; to find this heavenly tissue swept away, beaten down, and destroyed! it was to his fortunes, good or bad, that she had bound herself, to share his glory, or soothe his griefs; and not to be the mistress of the passing hour, the distaff of the spinning Hercules. It was her heart, her whole soul she had given; her understanding, her prophetic powers, all the little universe that with her ardent spirit she grasped and possessed, she had surrendered, fully and without reserve; but alas! the most worthless part alone had been accepted, and the rest cast as dust upon the winds. How in this moment did she long to be a winged soul, that her person heedlessly given, given only as a part of that to the whole of which he had an indefeasible right, and which was now despised, might melt away from the view of the despiser, and be seen no more! The words of her lover brought despair, not comfort; she shook her head in silence; Castruccio spoke again and again; but many words are dangerous where there is much to conceal, and every syllable he uttered laid bare some new forgery of her imagination, and showed her more and more clearly the harsh reality. She was astounded, and



drank in his words eagerly, though she answered not; she was impatient when he was silent, for she longed to know the worst; yet she dared not direct the course of his explanations by a single enquiry: she was as a mother, who reads the death-warrant of her child on the physician's brow, yet, blindly trusting that she decyphers ill, will not destroy the last hope by a question. Even so she listened to the assurances of Castuccio, each word being a fresh assurance of her misery, yet not stamping the last damning seal on her despair.

"At length grey dawn appeared; she was silent, motionless, and wan; she marked it not, but he did; and rising hastily he cried, 'I must go, or you are lost; farewell, Beatrice.'

"Now she awoke, her eyes glared, her lovely features became even distorted with the strength of her agony,—she started up—'Not yet, not yet—one word more! Do you—love another?'

"Her tone was that of command;—her flashing eyes demanded the truth, and seemed as if they would by their excessive force strike the falsehood dead, if he dared utter it: he was subdued, impelled to reply:—

"'I do.'

"'Her name?'

"'Euthanasia.'

"'Enough, I will remember that name in my prayers. Now, go! seek not to come again; the en-

trance will be closed ; do not endeavor to see me at the house of the bishop ; I shall fly you as a basilisk, and, if I see you, your eyes will kill me. These are my words ; they are as true, as that I am all a lie. It will kill me ; but I swear by all my hopes never to see you more ! Oh, never, never !

"She again sank down pale and lifeless, pressing her hands upon her eyes, as if the more speedily to fulfil her vow. Castruccio dared stay no longer, he fled as the dæmon might have fled from the bitter sorrows of despoiled Paradise ; he left her aghast, overthrown, annihilated."

After this Beatrice disappears from Ferrara and is lost sight of for years. She walks to Rome, begging alms at Euthanasia's castle by the way. During her pilgrimage she suffers terrible miseries. She reappears in an inquisitorial prison at Lucca, accused of being a Paterin. She sends for Euthanasia, who, after the razing of her castle, Valperga, by Castruccio, had taken up her abode in that city. Beatrice begs her to go to Castruccio and entreat him to release her from her horrible suspense. Wasted and ill, half mad with fear and suffering, she is but a wretched shadow of the lovely Beatrice who had swayed Ferrara by her inspired prophecies. Euthanasia goes to Castruccio, who hesitates to grant her entreaty only that he may prolong her visit and renew his vows to her, whom he still loved. But Euthanasia will not

listen to him, although her heart is cold with grief, and hastens back to release Beatrice. She takes her to her own home, nurses her tenderly, endeavoring by gentle influences to restore health and reason to the distracted girl.

"One day Beatrice went out. It was the first time she had quitted the palace; and Euthanasia was vexed and anxious. After an absence of some hours she returned; she was clothed in a great coarse cloak that entirely disguised her; she put it off; and, trembling, blushing, panting, she threw herself into the arms of her protectress.

"'I have seen him! I have seen him!'

"'Calm yourself, poor fluttering bird; you have seen him: well, well, he is changed, much altered; why do you weep?'

"'Aye, he is changed; but he is far more beautiful than he ever was. Oh, Euthanasia, how radiant, how divine he is! His eyes, which, like the eagle's, could outgaze the sun, yet melt in the sweetest love, as a cloud, shining yet soft; his brow, manly and expansive, on which his raven curls rest; his upturned lips, where pride, and joy, and love, and wisdom, and triumph live, small spirits, ready to obey his smallest wish; and his head cinctured by a slight diadem, looks carved out by the intensest knowledge of beauty! How graceful his slightest motion! and his voice,—his voice is here,—'

"Beatrice put her hand upon her heart; her eyes were filled with tears; and the whole expression of her face was softened and humanized. Suddenly she stopped; she dried her eyes; and, fixing them on Euthanasia, she took her two hands in hers, and looked on her, as if she would read her soul. 'Beautiful creature,' she said, 'once he told me that he loved you. Did he not? does he not? Why are you separated? do you not love him?'

"'I did; once I did truly; but he has cast off that which was my love; and, like a flower plucked from the stalk, it has withered—as you see it.'

"'Aye, that is strange. What did he cast off?'

"'Why will you make me speak? He cast off humanity, honesty, honorable feeling, all that I prize.'

"'Forms, forms,—mere forms, my mistaken Euthanasia. • *He* remained, and was not that everything? Methinks, it would please me, that my lover should cast off all humanity, and be a reprobate, and an outcast of his species. Oh! then how deeply and tenderly I should love him; soiled with crimes, his hands dripping with blood, I would shade him as the flowering shrub invests the ruin; I would cover him with a spotless veil; my intensity of love would annihilate his wickedness;—every one would hate him;—but, if all adored him, it would not come near the sum of my single affection. I should be everything to him, life, and hope; he would die in his remorse; but he would

live again and again in the light of my love; I would invest him as a silvery mist, so that none should see how evil he was; I would pour out before him large draughts of love, that he should become drunk with it, until he grew good and kind. So you deserted this glorious being, and he has felt the pangs of unrequited affection, the helpless throes of love cast as water upon the sand of the desert? Oh, indeed I pity him!

"'Believe me,' cried Euthanasia, 'he has other affections. Glory and conquest are his mistresses, and he is a successful lover; already he has deluged our valleys in blood, and turned our habitations into black and formless ruins; he has torn down the banners of the Florentines, and planted his own upon the towers of noble cities. I believe him to be happy.'

"'Thank God for that; I would pour out my blood drop by drop, to make him happy. But he is not married and you have deserted him; I love him; he has loved me; is it impossible—? Oh! foolish, hateful wretch that I am, what do I say? No creature was ever so utterly undone!'

"Beatrice covered her face with her hands; her struggles were violent; she shrunk from Euthanasia's consoling embrace; and at length, quite overcome, she sank in convulsions on the pavement of the hall."

At length, after many fluctuations between reason and insanity, Beatrice dies, and Euthanasia is left with empty hands and a weary future before her. She

returns to Florence with Castruccio's permission. Here a conspiracy is organized against him by her friends and relatives. She is entreated to join it. After repeated denials, she unites herself to the undertaking on condition that they will spare her Castruccio's life; that he is only to be deprived of his power. One of the conspirators betrays them, and they are all thrown into prison, Euthanasia among them. That night, at the hour of midnight, with his own hands Castruccio opens her prison door and bids her depart for a vessel bound for Sicily, where he had prepared an abode for her. She refuses to abandon her friends to die, but yielding to his entreaties leaves her prison and is conducted in the darkness by him across the country to the sea-coast. She bids Castruccio farewell and embarks. That very night a storm arises and the vessel is lost. Castruccio lives the terror of Italy, for some years after this event, but the story really ends with Euthanasia's death.

In "The Last Man" Mrs. Shelley writes with prophetic pen. The scene opens in the year 2096. England has become a republic, the royal family abdicating in favor of republican principles. A protector is at the head of the nation. Yet, alas! the great event which is nearest her she fails to see. Although railroads in a few years after the book is written are to spread a net-work over all the world, travelling at the

end of the twenty-first century is still by posting or private carriage, though once a balloon is alluded to as a means of transit. "The Last Man" is a prolonged description of the depopulation of the earth by a plague. France, Italy, all the world is stricken with the dreadful disease. Month follows month of ravaging death. Slowly but with agonizing certainty the inhabitants of England lessen till of all that vast country only a few hundred remain. The buildings and houses still stand; the cities, the country remain unaltered; but the utter annihilation of life proceeds till the few hundred yet unattacked by the certain death leave England and her horrible memories to pass the second winter of the plague in a warmer clime, where nature may be more generous to the stricken people.

With the protector at the head of these fifteen hundred survivors they take their *via dolorosa* toward Italy. Notices have been sent to all parts of England summoning the despairing remnant of the people to London, to proceed thence by slow marches to Dover. The last man writes the history of their direful journey. Before they reach Dover he has lost wife and child. Here mysterious and dreadful convulsions of the elements appal the terrified people,—unnatural suns and meteors, earthquakes and frightful storms, as if nature were enraged at their abandoning their hearths and homes, albeit blackened and desolated by

death. However, they embark and reach France; but so many delays occur that the whole winter is consumed before they leave Paris. And now the fierce desire of the slow-moving tide of stricken people is to reach Switzerland, plunge into the icy streams, and cool their burning bodies.

With the approach of hot weather the plague again lays relentless hold upon them. Their journey is delayed by the sick and dying. Slowly they progress. All the villages they pass are deserted and empty; the whole world is silent and dead. At the end of summer, on reaching Geneva, the little band numbers only fifty souls. When the snows of winter set in the hopeless handful moves on to Milan. That city of palaces is forsaken and echoless. A few animals roam the streets; the doors of the houses swing open; the rain beats in at the windows; food stands moulding on the tables; bats and owls nest in the mildewed draperies. Here, one by one, of fever or plague, the doomed people vanish from the earth till only three are left,—the last man, his niece, and brother. These beloved companions he sees perish before his eyes by the wreck of their vessel in a storm. He is alone,—a hopeless, solitary, desolate being. He, sole survivor of the plague, bears a charmed life.

He wanders from place to place to find if but one living soul remains to bear him company in the awful waste. Village and city are empty. He re-



solves to write the fate of his race. On the leaves of the trees, like the Cumean sibyl of old, he scrawls their awful miseries and death, and then, himself quitting life as the new century comes in, leaves the priceless records concealed in a cave near Naples, trusting that a single pair of lovers may yet have escaped to repeople the world and read the history of the awful annihilation.

"The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck" is an historical novel deserving attention. It is more cheerful in tone than its precursors, the interest depending more on the action of the narrative itself, the succession of events, the place in history of its hero, than on any fictitious creations of its author's brain, although Mrs. Shelley has presented us with a most unhistorical picture of Perkin Warbeck's character, making him noble, generous, and courageous where history has stamped him weak and a coward.

Barring the fact that Mrs. Shelley is always and entirely undramatic, this work is not without interest. For she has, with more or less skill, arranged in an attractive form the records of a romantic existence, which are else to be found in chronicles and histories. The story of Perkin Warbeck is the story of the younger of the two princes who were confined in the tower, the unfortunate sons of Edward IV. Though it is known that the elder died during his

confinement, a mystery has always hung over the fate of his brother. Whether he died there, or was secretly destroyed by his uncle, Richard III., or clandestinely removed from the tower by friends, will never be known. But Mrs. Shelley, differing from Hume and modern historians, agrees with the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed that the young duke was removed from the tower, educated abroad under the name of Perkin Warbeck, and that he afterward made lawful claim to the English crown. She believed, as did many of his contemporaries, that this Perkin Warbeck, the pretender, was the young Richard, Duke of York, heir to the throne of England when his uncle was killed on Bosworth Field.

Believing that to be the fact, she describes the life of a noble and lovable nature,—in his childhood, defrauded of country and kingdom ; in his youth, the sport of circumstances and perilous adventures ; in his manhood, betrayed by the treacheries of his friends and the cunning of his enemies. It is a record of romantic and marvellous escapes ; of a charmed life until the final catastrophe. When Richard was killed on Bosworth Field, and Henry VII. assumed the throne, uniting by his marriage the houses of York and Lancaster, the young heir, then nine or ten years old, was secretly conveyed to Flanders, and there educated as the son of a peasant, till the proper time for his acknowledgment should come.

But the proper time had passed when Henry was allowed to assume the throne. When, some eight years after,—after Henry is firmly established in his seat, and the heir of York has been living in silence and obscurity as Perkin Warbeck,—this reputed son of a peasant, supported by a few stanch Yorkists and the countries then at war with Henry, appears and claims the royal birthright, his countrymen care little whether he is an impostor or their true king, having become used to their new master. The golden hour is passed. Henry sits firmly on the throne. Ever the victim of misfortune and intrigue, the young prince travels, or rather escapes from one country to another, arousing always warm personal friendship and admiration by his nobility of character and his courage. Appearing now in Flanders and France, now in Portugal, now in Ireland and England, he owed many of his adherents to the wrapt enthusiasm and untiring zeal of a young Spanish maiden Monina. As did Jeanne Darc hold in her hands the fate of the young Charles IX., so did she seem to bear the fortunes of Perkin Warbeck. For often when his life was in danger did some subtle influence draw Monina to him in time to rescue him; often, when friends were faint and hope dead, did her ardent enthusiasm kindle new energy.

After Perkin Warbeck's sojourn at the court of James IV. of Scotland, and his marriage to the Lady

Katherine Gordon, the king's kinswoman, who it had been prophesied would be a queen, he descends upon the border with a motley band of invaders. Finding with horror that the Scots, under cover of fealty to him, simply raided and plundered their lowland neighbors, he and his loyal young wife crossed over to Ireland, hoping to find support there; failing which they sailed to Cornwall, living there in secret,—now with gypsies, now in a hut with Jane Shore and Monina. But the iron was cold. England, whatever it might believe of this royal youth, had been ruled too long and too well to risk its peace in uncertain insurrection.

Not Monina's enthusiasm nor sagacity, not Lady Katherine's courage, nor the loyalty of a few nobles could guard the prince they loved from treachery and his impending ruin. Warbeck, shortly after his arrival on English soil, fell into the trap that Henry had set for him, and, after a wretched imprisonment, was executed in Westminster, which place he had ever fixed as the goal of his dream of glory, the end of his wandering career. Such the Perkin Warbeck of Mrs. Shelley's creation.

History now leaves little doubt that this pretended Richard, Prince of York, this real Perkin Warbeck, was indeed what Henry declared him to be, the son of a Flemish boatman; that he owed his fortunes and his fate to a resemblance to the House of York, to the intrigues and designs of Henry's political enemies, to

the necessity of the Plantagenets for an heir, and to his own ambition. But the character was so well sustained through all his career, his claim was so well supported by foreign courts, he was so real a cause of anxiety to Henry, and the fate of the young Duke of York was so clothed in mystery, that history may well have had its doubts as to the personality of Perkin Warbeck.

"Lodore" is a novel of London life as it was in Mrs. Shelley's time. Her other works, aside from any personal worth, had a claim to attention from their historical or allegorical themes. But this poor book has no excuse for being. It is the old story, badly told, of a lord and his lady whose little differences of temper, taste, and pride create misunderstandings and disagreements. He (Lord Lodore) takes their infant daughter and sails for America, hews a home for himself in the forest-bound Illinois, and lives there until his daughter reaches the age of womanhood. He resolves to return to England, but in New York fights a duel and is killed. Thus vanishes the hero,—a man of violent passions, but generous and noble impulses. His daughter returns to England, to the care of his sister.

Meanwhile the Lady Lodore has lived the fashionable life of London, satisfying her heart with the triumphs of society. The motif of the book is the development of this selfish, arrogant, worldly woman

into a humble, lovable, self-sacrificing soul. A will made by Lord Lodore on his departure from England, and in the first heat of his anger towards his wife, provides her with an ample income if she does not attempt to see her child. During the first year of her daughter's return to England, Lady Lodore is well satisfied with this arrangement, but before the book closes she has sacrificed all her worldly goods, her jointure, her social position, and retired to poverty and obscurity to help this young daughter's husband out of a debtor's prison. The pangs of unrequited love are also to her a source of ennobling discipline. But the end of the book brings with it the happy termination of all her trials by her marriage to the lover who had been separated from her by malicious rumors.

There is a faint suggestion of Fanny Imlay in one of the people, who appears for a few chapters, and also incidents from the life of the "noble Emilia Viviani" are used in describing an Italian woman. But whatever the original characters are they are often distorted by the most glaring inconsistencies to meet the exigencies of the moment, and her poor, tortured people are never allowed to develop according to the bent of their nature. The bad, the good, the treacherous, the weak, are twisted into the shape that will serve one end and one aim,—a vapid, conventional morality.

The Spanish and Italian lives in "Lardner's Encyclopædia" are faithful and accurate historical studies. Mrs. Shelley labored conscientiously and diligently to present a truthful record of their lives. It was a work that she was well fitted to do, both from the wide extent of her general knowledge and the student-like and analytical tendency of her mind.

But it is to the nature and excellence of the notes to her husband's poems that the world is most indebted to Mrs. Shelley. They are perfectly truthful accounts of the states of mind and conditions under which the poems were written. Nothing is concealed, nothing omitted, even when she would perhaps have preferred to remain silent, that could explain the influences under which England's greatest lyrical poet wrote.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### RETURN TO ENGLAND—DEATH.

IN August of 1824, after an absence of nearly six years, Mrs. Shelley with her child returned to England. England, with its dull fogs and heavy, dripping days, which sent a chill to her heart after the luminous blue skies of Italy. Whatever of joy there was left her in her solitude was all named in that one word, Italy. Her days of happiness, of tenderest memories,—her sacred sorrow bound her to Italy. Under the softening influence of that gentle atmosphere the ruins of her life had ever about them a halo of sunshine and blue skies,—a restful peace brooded over her,—but in England her sorrow looked garish and bare.

How bitterly cruel that solitude to her, who so craved encouragement! In losing Shelley, she lost life itself, and it was only a profound heroism, and the guiding desire to do for their son all that her Shelley would have approved, that bound her to the earth. With noblest spirit and energy, in spite of harassing circumstances and disheartening barriers, in spite of the obstacles which Sir Timothy threw in her way, in



spite of the cruel anguish which consumed all that was rarest of heart and brain and ate into those intellectual powers which she so needed, this noble woman—sad shadow of that happy being who in the halcyon days of her love had written "*Frankenstein*"—for twenty years supported herself and her son by her literary labors.

Wrapping herself in the gentle influence of her Shelley, praying to his spirit to strengthen and support her, with feeble powers, she took up her pen; but the fire of her genius had been quenched by the same waters that swept Shelley from her arms. Writing in her journal at a later date, she says, "Amidst all the depressing circumstances that weigh upon me, none sinks deeper than the failure of my intellectual powers. Nothing I write pleases me. Whether I am just in this or whether it is the want of Shelley's encouragement, I can hardly tell; but it seems to me that the lovely and sublime objects of Nature had been my best inspirers, and wanting these, I am lost. Although so utterly miserable at Genoa, yet what reveries were mine as I looked on the aspect of the ravine—the sunny deep and its boats—the promontories clothed in purple light—the starry heavens—the fire-flies—the uprising of spring! Then I could think; and my imagination could invent and combine; and self became absorbed in the grandeur of the universe I created. Now, my mind is a blank—a gulf filled with

formless mist. 'The Last Man'! Yes, I may well describe that solitary being's feelings; I feel myself as the last relic of a beloved race my companions extinct before me.

"Mine own Shelley! what a horror you had of returning to this miserable country! To be here without you is to be doubly exiled; to be away from Italy, is to lose you twice!"

During the last year of Shelley's life, affairs had been growing worse and worse in Skinner Street, and Godwin had written to Mrs. Shelley an appeal for aid. No one could have been more generous or unselfish of her labor and her earnings than she. All the years when she was struggling against depressed spirits and ill health, to support herself and her son, and to provide for his education, she was at the same time contributing largely to her father's maintenance.

"SKINNER ST., May 3, 1822.

"DEAR MARY,—" writes Godwin—"I wrote to you a fortnight ago and professed my intention of not writing again. I certainly will not write when the result will be to give pain, unmitigated pain. It is the questionable shape of what I have to communicate that still thrusts the pen into my hand. This day we are compelled by summary process to leave the house we live in, and to hide our heads in whatever alley will receive us. If we can compound with our creditor

and he seems not unwilling to receive £400 (I have talked with him on the subject) we may emerge again. Our business if freed from this intolerable burthen is more than ever worth keeping.

“But all this would perhaps have failed in inducing me to resume the pen but for an extraordinary accident. Wednesday, May 1, was the day when the last legal step was taken against me. On Wednesday morning a few hours before this catastrophe, Willatts, the man who three or four years before lent Shelley £2000 at two for one, called to ask me whether Shelley wanted any more money on the same terms. What does this mean? In the contemplation of such a coincidence I could almost grow superstitious. But alas, I fear, I fear, I am a drowning man catching at straws.

“Ever most affectionately your father,

“WILLIAM GODWIN.”

Shelley himself answered the appeal in this letter to Mrs. Godwin. It is dated Lerici, May 29, 1822, and is the last letter that he wrote to England:

“DEAR MADAM,—Mrs. Mason has sent me an extract from your last letter to show Mary, and I have received that of Mr. Godwin in which he mentions your having left Skinner St. In Mary’s present state of health and spirits much caution is requisite

with regard to communications, which must agitate her in the highest degree, and the object of my present letter is simply to inform you that I have thought right to exercise this caution on the present occasion. Mary is at present about three months advanced in pregnancy and the irritability and languor which accompany this state are always distressing and sometimes alarming. I do not know how soon I can permit her to receive such communications, or how soon you and Mr. Godwin, would wish they should be conveyed to her if you could have any idea of the effect. Do not however let me be misunderstood. It is not my intention nor my wish that the circumstances in which your family are involved should be concealed from her, but that the details should be suspended until they assume a more prosperous character, or at least the letters addressed to her, or intended for her perusal on that subject, should not convey a supposition that she could do more than she does, thus exasperating the sympathy which she already feels too intensely for her father's distress, which she would sacrifice all she possesses, to remedy, but the remedy of which is beyond her power. She imagined that her novel might be turned to immediate advantage for him. I am greatly interested in the fate of this production, which appears to me to possess a high degree of merit, and I regret that it is not Mr. Godwin's intention to publish it immediately. I am sure that

Mary would be delighted to amend anything that her father thought imperfect in it, though I confess if his objection relate to the character of Beatrice, I shall lament the deference which would be shown by the sacrifice of any portion of it, to his feelings and ideas, which are but for a day. I wish Mr. Godwin would write to her on that subject, and he might advert to the letter, for it is only the last one which I have suppressed, or not as he thought proper.

“I have written to Mr. Smith to solicit the loan of £400 which if I can obtain it in that manner, is very much at Mr. Godwin’s service. The views which I now entertain of my affairs, forbid me to enter into any further reversionary transactions, nor do I think Mr. Godwin would be a gainer by the contrary determination, as it would be next to impossible to effect any such bargain at this distance. Nor could I burthen my income, which is barely sufficient to meet its various claims and the system of life in which it seems necessary that I should live.

“We hear you have Jane’s news from Mrs. Mason. Since the late melancholy event,\* she has become far more tranquil, nor should I have anything to desire with regard to her, did not the uncertainty of my own life, and prospects, render it prudent for her to attempt to establish some sort of independence, as a security

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\* The death of Allegra, who died at the convent at Venice.

against an event, which would deprive her of that, which she at present enjoys. She is well in health and usually resides in Florence where she has formed a little society for herself among the Italians, with whom she is a great favorite. She was here for a week or two and though she has now returned to Florence, we expect her soon to visit us for the summer months. In the winter, unless some of her various plans succeed, for she may be called, *la fille aux mille projêts*, she will return to Florence.

“ Mr. Godwin may depend on receiving immediate notice of the result of my application to Mr. Smith. I hope to hear soon an account of your situation and prospects, and remain

“ Dear Madam, yours very sincerely,

“ P. B. SHELLEY.”

It must be remarked that Godwin had already received considerable aid from Shelley, as he had, indeed, from every friend and acquaintance he ever made. Godwin was indeed a drowning man. He was obliged to leave Skinner Street at two days' notice, under the pain of having his possessions tossed into the street by his landlord; while the sheriff, who had an execution on their goods, would not allow them to be moved. However, the sheriff was temporarily satisfied and the removal was made. The family subsequently settled themselves in the Strand.

**It** was to her father's house that Mrs. Shelley went on her return to England. But in nine years both house and household were altered, perhaps she most of all. Fanny, whose bright and amiable disposition made her dear to them all, was dead; Charles Clairmont was married and living as a tutor in Vienna; Jane spent most of her time on the Continent; William, a school-boy when Mary left home, was now about to go out in the world of commerce; her father was still cheerful and philosophical, but he was, however, growing feeble; Mrs. Godwin was much the same as ever,—perhaps natures like hers rarely change for the better as they increase in years,—certain it is, that she was still querulous and exacting.

Leigh Hunt, who, before his departure for Italy, had lived in that charming atmosphere of musical people, among whom Vincent Novello and Mary, his wife, were conspicuous for their great-heartedness, sent the following letter, introducing Mrs. Shelley, to his friend Novello. **It** was written with what Mary Shelley would have called Hunt's "characteristic enthusiasm," and evidently at the time when she was in his approval.

"To V. N. (By favor of MRS. SHELLEY):

"ALBARO, July 24th, 1823.

"MY DEAR NOVELLO,—Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter brings you this letter. I know you would

receive her with all your kindness and respect for that designation alone; but there are a hundred other reasons why you will do so, including her own extraordinary talents, (which at the same time no woman can be less obtrusive with), the pleasure you will find in her society, and last not least, her love of music and regard for a certain professor of ditto—but I have spoken of this introduction already. I do not send you a long letter for reasons given in the same place, but I trust it will be as good as a long letter in its return to *me*, because it sets you the example of writing a short one when you cannot do more. How I envy Mary Shelley the power of taking you all by the hands and joining your kind-hearted circle! But I am there very often myself, I assure you; invisible it is true, and behind the curtain: but it is possible you know to be behind a curtain and yet be very intensely present besides. But do not let any one consider Mary S. in the light of a Blue, of which she has a great horror, but as an unaffected person with her faults and good qualities like the rest of us; the former extremely corrected by all she has seen and endured, the latter inclining her like a wise and kind being, to receive all the consolation which the good and the kind can give her. She will be grave with your gravities, and laugh as much as you please with your merriments. For the rest she is as quiet as a mouse, and will drink in as much Mozart and Paesello as you



choose to **afford** her, with an enjoyment you might take for a **Quaker's**, unless you could contrive some day to put **her** into a state of pain, when she will immediately **grow** as eloquent, and say as many fine things as **she** can discourse in a novel.

"God **ble**ss you dear Novello. From Florence I shall send **y**ou some music, especially what you wanted in **R**ome.

"From **th**is place I can send you nothing except a ring of my **h**air, which you must wear for the sake of your affecti**o**nate friend.

"L. H."

Many and charming were the musical gatherings under the **N**ovellos' hospitable roof. Here the true lovers of **m**usic were to be found, musicians in the real sense of **th**e word, professional or amateur.

Charles **C**owden Clarke writes of the little circle as he remembers it, while Mary Novello, his future wife, was yet a **child** in pinafores. "The Novellos after leaving Oxford St., and residing for a few years at 8, Percy Street, **h**ad taken a large old-fashioned house and garden on **S**hacklewell Green: and it was here that **th**ey made **w**elcome Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams **o**n their return from Italy, two young and beautiful **w**idows, **w**ooing them by gentle degrees into peace-**fuller** and **h**opefuller mood of mind after their storm of **b**ereavement abroad. By quiet meetings for home

music: by calmly cheerful and gradually sprightlier converse, by affectionate familiarity and reception into their own family circle of children and friends, Vincent and Mary Sabella Novello sought to draw these two fair women into reconciliation with life and its still surviving blessings. Very, very fair, both ladies were. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley with her well-shaped golden-haired head, almost always a little bent and drooping, her marble-white shoulders and arms statuesquely visible in the perfectly plain black velvet dress, which the customs of that time allowed to be cut low, and which her own taste adopted (for neither she nor her sister-in-sorrow ever wore the conventional 'widow's weeds' and 'widow's cap'); her thoughtful earnest eyes; her short upper lip and intellectually curved mouth, with a certain close compressed and decisive expression while she listened, and a little relaxation into fuller redness and mobility when speaking; her exquisitely formed white dimpled small hands, with rosy palms and plumply commencing fingers, that tapered into tips as slender and delicate as those in a Vandyk picture—all remain palpably present to my memory. Another peculiarity in Mrs. Shelley's hand was its singular flexibility, which permitted her bending the fingers back so as almost to approach the portion of her arm above her wrist. She once did this smilingly and repeatedly to amuse the girl [M. C. C.] who was

noting its whiteness and pliancy and who now as an old woman records its remarkable beauty. Very sweet and very encouraging was Mary Shelley to her young namesake, Mary Victoria, making her proud and happy by giving her a presentation copy of her wonderful book 'Frankenstein' (still in treasured preservation, with its autograph gift-words,) and pleasing her girlish fancy by the gift of a string of cut coral, graduated beads from Italy. On such pleasant terms of kindly intimacy was Mrs. Shelley at this period, with the Novellos, that she and Mrs. Novello interchanged with one another their sweet familiar names of 'Mary;' and she gave the Italianized form of his name to Mr. Novello, calling him 'Vincenzo' in her most caressing tones, when she wished to win him into indulging her with some of her especially favorite strains of music. Even his brother Mr. Francis Novello, she would address as 'Francesco,' as loving to speak the soft Italian syllables. Her mode of uttering the word 'Lerici' dwells upon our memory with peculiarly subdued and lingering intonation, associated as it was with that picturesque spot where she learned she had lost her beloved 'Shelley' forever from this fair earth. She was never tired of asking 'Francesco' to sing in his rich, mellow, bass voice, Mozart's 'Qui Sdegno,' 'Possenti Numi,' 'Mentre ti lascio,' 'Tuba mirum,' 'La Vendetta,' 'Non piu andrai,' or 'Madamina'; so fond was she of his sing-

ing her favorite composer. Greatly she grew to enjoy the concerted pieces from 'Cosè fair tutte,' that used to be got up 'round the piano.'"

And to this picture Mrs. Clarke adds her own recollection. "Certainly Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley was the central figure of attraction then to my young girl sight; and I looked upon her with ceaseless admiration—for her personal graces, as well as for her literary distinction. The daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, the wife of Shelley, the authoress of 'Frankenstein,' had for me a concentration of charm and interest that perpetually excited and engrossed me while she continued a visitor at my father's house. My father held her in especial regard, and she evinced equally affectionate esteem for him. A note of hers, dated a few years after the Shacklewell days, sending him the priceless treasure of a lock of her illustrious mother's hair, and written in the melodious tongue so dear to both writer and receiver, shall be here transcribed for the reader to share the pleasure of its perusal with her who has both note and hair carefully enshrined beneath a crystal covering.

"Tempo fà, mio caro Vincenzo, vi promisi questa treccia dei capelli della mia Madre—non mi son scordata della mia promessa e voi non vi siete scordato di me—sono securissima. Il regalo presenti adunque vi farà rammentare piacevolmente lei chi ama per sem-

pre i suoi amici—**fra** di quali crederà di sempre trovaroi quantumque le cerconstanze ci dividono.

“‘State felice—e conservatemi almeno la vostra stima, vi prega la vostra amica vera.

“‘MARY SHELLEY.\*

“‘11 March, 1826.’”

Dear and faithful friends were the Novellos to Mary Shelley in this dismal return to a gloomy land.

To the description which Charles Cowden Clarke has given of Mrs. Shelley's personal appearance may be added another: the name of the author does not appear, but Lady Shelley writes, “It must be some one who knew her well.” “I have never seen a portrait that at all did her justice,” writes the author. “If not a beauty she was a most interesting, *lovable-looking* woman; with a skin exquisitely fair, and expressive grey eyes; features delicate, yet of that style and proportion which have won the term of ‘aristocratic;’ hair of a light but bright brown, most silky in texture

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\* Some time ago, my dear Vincenzo, I promised you this tress of my mother's hair; I have not forgotten my promise, and you have not forgotten me, I am very sure. The present which I send you will therefore remind you pleasantly of her who ever loves her friends, among whom she trusts always to find you whatever circumstances may divide us.

Be happy, and preserve for me at least your esteem, this is the prayer of your true friend.

and luxuriant in profusion, which hung in long drooping ringlets over her colourless cheek, and gathered in a cluster behind, fell wavingly over her shoulders; a large, open forehead; white and well-moulded arms and hands: She was a degree under the middle height, and rather inclining to *embonpoint*. . . . Mary Shelley always seemed to me to bear a strong resemblance to the pictures of Miss O'Neill the actress; and then her voice—well might her husband, writing of it, say—

“ ‘ Like the music of a bird,  
Voice the sweetest ever heard.’ ”

“ I never heard but one voice that equalled the melody of its low, soft, murmuring tones. . . .

. . . “ Though then young,” continues this lady, “ she had none of the buoyancy or elasticity of youth about her. The trappings of grief and ‘ livery of woe ’ had been cast aside; still there was a settled sadness, a grave, gentle melancholy, in her face, and voice, and gait, which at once aroused your sympathy and elicited your interest in her. . . . To avoid note or observation—to adopt in dress, manner, and deportment, nothing that could challenge either of these—appeared her especial desire and aim. . . . She was especially graceful in her demeanor and action. If she sat down it was just in the attitude an artist would have selected. This was not the result of study or effort. It was natural: she did nothing for effect. . . . I

never knew in **my** life, either man or woman whose character was so **entirely** in harmony ; no jarring discords—no incongruous, anomalous, antagonistic opposites—met to disturb the perfect unity, and counteract one day the impressions of the former. Gentleness was ever and always her distinguishing characteristic. Many years' friendship never showed me a deviation from it. But with **this** softness there was neither irresolution nor feebleness ; but the sternest resolution, the most steadfast purpose, would be carried out, without the loud voice, the violent gesture, which, I am sorry to say, so many of her sex, to their own great detriment, too often delight to indulge in. . . .

“ It is too often the case that some authors talk overmuch of their writings, and all thereunto belonging. Mrs. Shelley was the extremest reverse of this. In fact she was almost morbidly averse to the least allusion to herself as an authoress. To call on her and find her table covered with all the accessories and unmistakable traces of *book-making*—such as copy, proofs for correction, &c.,—made her nearly as nervous as if she had been detected in the commission of some offence against the conventionalities of society or code of morality. . . . Except in what had reference to her husband, she **was** anything but a vain woman, either personally or mentally ; and had not a taint of those hateful deteriorating adjuncts, coquetry or affectation.”

Shortly after her arrival in England, Mrs. Shelley

writes this bright, gossipy letter to Leigh Hunt, touching upon people and things with a light fancy that is charming.

“LONDON, September 9th, 1823.

“MY DEAR HUNT,—Bessy\* promised me to relieve you from any inquietude, you might suffer from not hearing from me, so I indulged myself with not writing to you until I was quietly settled in lodgings of my own. Want of time is not my excuse; I had plenty but until I saw all quiet around me, I had not the spirit to write a line. I thought of you all—how much!—and often longed to write, yet would not till I called myself free to turn southward;—to imagine you all, to put myself in the midst of you, would have destroyed all my philosophy. But now I do so. I am in neat little lodgings, my boy in bed, I quiet, and I will now talk to you, tell you what I have seen and heard, and with as little repining as I can, try (by making the best of what I have, the certainty of your friendship and kindness) to rest half content that I am not in the ‘Paradise of Exiles.’ Well first I will tell you journalwise, the history of my sixteen days in London. I arrived Monday the 25th of August. My father and William came for me to the wharf. I had an excellent passage, of 11½ hours, a glassy sea, and a contrary wind—the smoke of our fire was wafted

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\* Elizabeth Kent, Mrs. Hunt's sister.



right aft and streamed out behind us; but the wind was of little consequence, the tide was with us; and though the engine gave a 'short uneasy motion,' to the vessel, the water was so smooth that no one on board was sick, and Persino played about the deck in high glee. I had a very kind reception in the Strand and all was done that could be done to make me comfortable. I exerted myself to keep up my spirits. The house though rather dismal, is infinitely better than the Skinner St. one. I resolved not to think of certain things, to take all as a matter of course, and thus contrived to keep myself out of the gulf of melancholy, over the edge of which I was, and am continually peeping.

"But lo and behold! I found myself famous. 'Frankenstein' had had prodigious success as a drama, and was about to be repeated for the 23rd night at the English Opera House. The play-bill amused me extremely, for in the list of *dramatis personæ* came —, by Mr. T. Cooke; this nameless mode of naming the unnameable is rather good.

"On Friday August 29th, Jane, my father, William and I, went to the theatre to see it. Wallack looked very well as F. He is at the beginning full of hope and expectation. At the end of the first act, the stage represents a room, with a staircase leading to F's workshop: he goes to it and you see his light at a small window through which a frightened servant

peeps, who runs off in terror, when F. exclaims, 'It lives!' Presently F. himself rushes in horror and trepidation from the room, and while still expressing his agony and terror,—throws down the door of the laboratory, leaps the staircase, and presents his unearthly and monstrous person on the stage. The story is not well managed but Cooke played ——'s part extremely well: his seeking as it were for support—his trying to grasp at the sounds he heard—all, indeed he does, was well imagined and executed. I was much amused, and it appeared to excite a breathless eagerness in the audience. It was a third piece: a scanty pit filled at half price, and all stayed till it was over. They continue to play it even now.

"On Saturday, August the 30th I went with Jane to the Gisborne's. I know not why, but seeing them seemed more than anything else to remind me of Italy. Evening came on drearily. The rain splashed on the pavement, nor star, nor moon deigned to appear. I looked upward, to seek an image of Italy, but a blotted sky told me only of my change. I tried to collect my thoughts and then again dared not think, for I am a ruin where owls and bats live only, and I lost my last *singing* bird, when I left Albaro. It was my birthday, and it pleased me to tell the people so—to recollect and feel that time flies; and what is to arrive is nearer, and my home not so far off, as it was a year ago. This same evening, on my return to the Strand, I saw

Lamb who was very entertaining and amiable, though a little deaf. One of the first questions he asked me was whether they made puns in Italy. I said, 'Yes, now Hunt is there.' He said that Burney made a pun in Otaheite, the first that was ever made in that country: at first the natives could not make out what he meant, but all at once they discovered the *pun*, and danced round him in transports of joy. L. said one thing which I am sure will give you pleasure. He corrected for Hazlitt a new edition of 'Elegant Extracts,' in which living poets are included. He said he was much pleased with many of your things, with a little of Montgomery and a little of Crabbe. Scott he found tiresome. Byron had many fine things, but was tiresome; but yours appeared to him the freshest and best of all. These 'Extracts' have never been published; they have been offered to Mr. Hunter, and seeing the book at his house, I had the curiosity to look at what the extracts were that pleased L. There was the canto of the 'Fatal Passion,' from 'Rimini,' several things from 'Foliage,' and from the 'Amyntas.' L. mentioned also your 'Conversation with Coleridge,' and was much pleased with it. He was very gracious to me, and invited me to see him when Miss L. should be well. . . .

"Having secured neat cheap lodgings, I removed hither last night. Such dear Hunt, is the outline of your poor Exile's history. After two days of rain the

weather has been *uncommonly* fine, *ciòè* without rain, and cloudless I believe; though I trust to other eyes for that fact, since the whitewashed sky is anything but blue to any but the perceptions of the natives themselves. It is so cold however that the fire I am now sitting by, is not the first that has been lighted for my father had one two days ago.

“The wind is east and piercing, but I comfort myself with the hope that softer gales are now fanning your *not* throbbing temples—that the climate of Florence will prove kindly to you, and that your health and spirits will return to you. Why am I not there? This is quite a foreign country to me: the names of the places sound strangely; the voices of the people are new and grating—the vulgar English they speak particularly displeasing. But for my father I should be with you next spring: but his heart and soul are set on my stay: and in this world it always seems one’s duty to sacrifice one’s own desires, and that claim ever appears the strongest which claims such a sacrifice.

“On Tuesday, Sept. 2nd, I dined with Mr. Hunter\* and Bessy, and she afterwards drank tea with me at the Strand.

“One thing at Mr. Hunter’s amused me very much. Your piping Faun and kneeling Venus are on the

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\* Mrs. Hunt’s stepfather.

piano ; but from a feeling of delicacy they are turned with their backs to the company. I think of going down to Richmond on Friday and taking a last peep at green fields and leaves, before I return to my winter cage."

Godwin grew more and more to depend upon his daughter for sympathy and companionship, but not without arousing the jealousy of the ever-watchful Mrs. Godwin ; and in the letters which he writes to his wife he speaks of his daughter, never as " Mary," always as " Mrs. Shelley."

In one letter he writes, " You are wrong in saying I do not want your society, and still more in supposing Mrs. Shelley supplies the deficiency. I see her perhaps twice a week, but I feel myself alone ten times a day, and particularly at meals, and after meals, which are the periods at which, from nature or habit, I most feel the want of a human countenance to look at, and of a human voice, with which to exchange the accents of kindness and sympathy."

Godwin was now an old man. His circle of friends, once so extensive, was narrowed by death and separation. He made few visits. A rubber of whist, an hour at the theatre of an evening, where he had always a pass, a visit from some old friend, or his daughter and the little grandson, of whom he was very fond, was about all the society he saw.

After Mrs. Shelley's long absence, the return to English friends and English minds was a new interest and diversion, but the dull climate was a constant pain to her. Her circle of acquaintances and friends included many of those semi-professional *littérateurs* who gave promise of brilliant futures and of which that age was so full, but whose names are now familiar to the world, more by the constant allusions and friendship of their illustrious contemporaries than by any claim they have to fame.

She also numbered among her acquaintances those illustrious contemporaries,—the Lambs, the Hares, Tom Moore, Procter, Crabbe Robinson, Holcroft, Coleridge, Landor, Hazlitt. That circle of literary people who composed an age that will be renowned for all time alike for its humor, its delicate fancy, and the brilliance of its imagination,—an age so rich as to have produced both Shelley and Keats, Byron, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

On November 26th, Crabbe Robinson makes this entry in his journal: "Took tea and supper at Godwin's. The Lambs there and some young men. We played whist, &c. Mrs. Shelley there. She is unaltered, yet I did not know her at first. She looks elegant and sickly and young. One would not suppose she was the author of 'Frankenstein.'"

In the following letter to Mrs. Hunt she alludes humorously to Lamb:

“Nov 27th [1823] LONDON.

“MY DEAREST POLLY,—Are you not a naughty girl? How could you copy a letter to that ‘agreeable unaffected woman Mrs. Shelley,’ without saying a word from yourself to your loving grandmother? My dear Polly, a line from you forms a better picture for me of what you are all about than—alas! I was going to say three pages, but I check myself—than the rare one page of Hunt. Do not think that I forget you, even Percy does not, and he often tells me to bid the Signor Enrico and you to get in a carriage and then into a boat and to come to *questo paese* with baby nuovo, Henry, Swinburne *e tutti*. But that will not be: nor shall I see you at Mariano. This is a dreary exile for me: during a long month of cloud and fog how often have I sighed for my beloved Italy! Yet, in truth as far as regards mere money matters and worldly prospects, I keep up my philosophy with excellent success: others wonder at this but I do not; nor is there any philosophy in it. After having witnessed the mortal agonies of my two darling children—after that journey from and to Lerici, I feel all these as pictures and trifles, as long as I am kept out of contact with the unholy. I was upset to-day, by being obliged to see —, and the prospect of seeing others of his tribe. I can earn a sufficiency, I doubt not. In Italy I should be content. Here I will not bemoan—indeed I never do: and Mrs. —

makes *large eyes* at the quiet way in which I take it all. It is England alone that annoys me: yet sometimes I get among friends and almost forget its fogs. I go to Shacklewell rarely, and sometimes see the Novellos elsewhere. He is my especial favorite, and his music always transports me to the seventh heaven.

"I see the Lambs rather often: she ever amiable, and Lamb witty and delightful. I must tell you one thing and make H. laugh. Lamb's new house at Islington is close to the New River, and George Dyer, after having paid them a visit, on going away at twelve at noonday, walked deliberately into the water, taking it for the high road. But, as he said afterwards to Procter, 'I soon found that I was in the water sir.' So Miss L. and the servant had to fish him out. I must tell Hunt also a good saying of Lamb's: talking of some one he said, 'Now some men who are very veracious are called matter-of-fact men: but such an one I should call a matter-of-lie man.'

"I have seen also, Procter with his 'beautifully-formed head,' (it *is* beautifully formed) several times, and I like him. He is an enthusiastic admirer of Shelley, and most zealous in the bringing out the volume of his poems; this alone would please me, and he is moreover gentle and gentlemanly, and apparently endowed with a true poetic feeling. Besides he is an invalid; and some time ago I told you in a letter that I have always a sneaking, (for sneaking read open) kind-



ness for men of literary, and particularly poetic, habits, who have delicate health. I cannot help revering the mind delicately attuned, that shatters the material frame, and whose thoughts are strong enough to throw down and dilapidate the walls of sense and dikes of flesh that the unimagivative contrive to keep in such good repair. . . . Peacock says Hogg is grown thinner, and I suppose he is since he is not as you described him fat, but is the same in person and everything (*una cosa di meno*), as far as I can see, and his colour which often changes, shows I think that his sensibility remains. . . . After all I spend a great deal of my time in solitude. I have been hitherto fully occupied in preparing Shelley's MSS. It is now complete and the poetry alone will make a large volume. Will you tell Hunt that he need not send any of the MSS. that he has (except the 'Essay on Devils,' and some lines addressed to himself on his arrival in Italy, if he should choose them to be inserted), as I have recopied all the rest. We should be very glad however of his notice as quickly as possible, as we wish the book to be out in a month at furthest, and that will not be possible unless he sends it immediately; it would break my heart if the book should appear without it. When he does send a packet over, (let it be directed to his brother) will he be so good as to send me a copy of my 'Choice,' beginning after the line, 'Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might.' Perhaps dear

Marianne, you would have the kindness to copy them for me, and send them soon. I have another favor to ask of you. Miss Curran has a portrait of Shelley in many things very like, and she has so much talent that I entertain great hopes that she will be able to make a good one: for this purpose I wish her to have all the aids possible, and among the rest a profile from you. If you could not cut another perhaps you would send her one already cut; and if you send it with a note requesting her to return it, when she had done with it, I will engage that it will be most faithfully [fully returned]. At present I am not quite sure where she is, but I [MS. illegible] should be there, and you can find her and send her this, I need not tell you how you would oblige me: you would oblige Henry if he got a good portrait.

"I have heard from Bessy that Hunt is writing something for the *Examiner* for me. I conjecture that this may be concerning 'Valperga.' I shall be glad indeed when that comes, or, in lieu of it anything else. John Hunt begins to despair, since he says that without Indicators the Literary Examiner must fail. That the E. is so constituted now, on account of the admission of advertisements, that anything not immediately of the day could not be printed in it, and that he despairs of the possibility of setting up anything new.

"And now dear Polly I think I have done with gossip and business—with words of affection and

kindness I should never have done. I am inexpressibly anxious about you all. Percy has had a similar, though shorter attack to that at Albaro but he is now recovered. I have a cold in my head, occasioned, I suppose by the weather. Ah, Polly! if the beauties of England were to have only the mirror that Richard III. desires, a very short time would be spent at the looking-glass. What of Florence and the gallery? I saw the Elgin marbles to-day—to-morrow I am to go to the Museum and look over the prints; that will be a great treat. The Theseus is a divinity. But how very few statues they have. Kiss the children. Ask Thornton for his promised and forgotten P.S. Give my love to Hunt, and believe me, my dear Marianne, the exiled but ever most

“ Affectionately yours,

“ MARY W. S.”

She wished Leigh Hunt to write a short memoir of his friend for the coming volume of Shelley's poems, but Hunt's absence made it impossible for them to confer together on the subject, and the volume appeared without the memoir. Afterward, when she herself was making the preparation and collecting the materials for a life of Shelley, which all his friends felt could best be performed by her hands, Sir Timothy put such obstacles in her path that she was obliged to give it up, and after his death in 1844, solitude and

sorrow and illness had made such ravages in her health that she had not the strength for the undertaking. The notes to the poems are so valuable as criticisms, and as narrating the influences and condition of mind under which Shelley wrote, that it is a great loss that she did not write her impressions of his life.

Meanwhile, beside preparing Shelley's MSS. for publication, she was finishing her novel, "The Last Man," which was printed the same year as the poems, 1824. One of her greatest recreations was the occasional delight of seeing good acting and hearing good music. After seeing Kean she conceived the idea of writing for the stage, and submitted a play to her father, who criticised it severely, and dissuaded her from making another attempt. She reluctantly complied, but always felt convinced, as she wrote years after to Mrs. Gisborne, that she could have written a good tragedy.

On May 15, 1824, the news of Lord Byron's death, which had just reached England, makes her write in her journal, "God grant I may die young. A new race is springing up about me. At the age of twenty-six I am in the condition of an aged person. All my old friends are gone: I have no wish to form new: I cling to the few remaining; but they slide away and my heart fails when I think by how few ties I hold to the earth."

But a moment of intellectual activity returns to her, for on June 8th she writes, "What a divine night

it is! A calm twilight pervades the clear sky: the lamp-like moon is hung out in heaven, and the bright west retains the dye of sunset. If such weather would continue I would again write; the lamp of thought is again illuminated in my heart, and the fire descends from heaven that kindles it. I feel my powers again; and this is of itself happiness. The eclipse of winter is passing from my mind; I shall again feel the enthusiastic glow of composition—again as I pour forth my soul upon paper, feel the winged ideas arise, and enjoy the delight of expressing them. Study and occupation will be a pleasure, and not a task: and this I shall owe to the sight, and companionship of trees and meadows, flowers, and sunshine.”

In a letter to Leigh Hunt, after her removal to Kentish Town, she speaks of Lord Byron's death. Surely no one who had seen those three friends at Pisa,—Shelley, Byron, Williams,—in the prime of their intellectual and physical vigor, could have believed that before two years should pass each would be the victim of an untoward death.

“5, BARTHOLOMEW PLACE, KENTISH TOWN, July 29th, [1824].

“I hope my dear Hunt, that you will receive the volume of Shelley's poems, which I have sent you through Mrs. Mason. It is I believe, selling tolerably well. Since writing to Marianne, I have removed to this part of the world; but this I may say is the only

change that has taken place in my situation, except indeed, that alteration in spirit which is occasioned by a miraculous duration of fine weather. We (i.e. the English—I used to say *they*, *aiurè!* talking of the natives) have not had such a summer, they say, for these five years; *manca* a shower or two, we have not had a mizzle this fortnight. They call it hot—it is not—but it is pleasant weather; a little cloudy or so, but so convenient in heat, that I echo an Italian image seller who said to me ‘*Sarei contento se durasse.*’

“I had a letter the other day from Trelawny; it was dated Missolonghi, to which place he had come hoping to save or attend on the last moments of Lord Byron, but he came too late. The funeral last week passed my home. What should I have said to a Cassandra, who three years ago should have prophesied that Jane and I—Edward and Shelley gone—should watch the funeral procession of Lord Byron up Highgate Hill? All changes of romance or drama lay far behind this. Trelawny is sanguine about the cause and his own personal advancement. He has formed a friendship also for a young man (I suppose a Greek) whom he compares to Shelley in enthusiasm and talent.

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“I lead a very different life now from that which I did during the winter—something that approaches to my Italian one. Jane and I live near each other and

see each other almost every day : we dwell on the past and dream of future Italy. I make hardly any visits except to my father, and endeavor to be as recluse as I can, without giving up the friendship of the very few who are dear to me. Operas and theatres are over for me now in summer-time.

“ I long to hear from you. I fear that you are not well or happy, and this long silence on your part seems to arise from that. I wish we could change places. I would not wish for better than the chesnut-covered hills and olive groves of Marano : glowing sunsets, fire-flies, the cry of the aziola, the language of the [MS. illegible] Toscano—things associated to me with my happiest days ; you would be pleased with a quiet abode in Kentish Town—a stroll through its green meadows, and rambles up its gentle hills—very pretty things no doubt ; and I make the best of them, delighted to have escaped dreary London, and resolved to enjoy the summer.

“ Mr. Beddoes (a very great admirer of our Shelley) is now in Italy. He is to get the portrait from Miss Curran, who I fancy is in Rome. Could not Marianne send one of the portraits already cut to Miss Curran (who I know would return it with care) and who by this means would make a better likeness, than any that exists at present ? I own that my heart is set upon Marianne's doing this ; for what would I not give for a portrait which, while he was with me, I so

often resolved to obtain, and was obliged perpetually to disappoint myself? Marianne wished for scissors which I had no opportunity of sending, but she has some cut. Give my love to her, and tell her I throw myself at her feet, and implore her to comply with my request. How is she, poor thing? and how is Thorny and dear Henry, whom Percy has not forgotten.

"It would give me great pleasure if either you or Marianne would write. I love you both tenderly. I am ever,

"Your affectionate,

"MARY W. SHELLEY."

On August 22d she writes again :

"MY DEAR HUNT,—Although I know that you wish yourself in England, yet it seems to me as if I wrote to Paradise from Purgatory. Our summer is over and rain and perpetual cloud veil this dreary land. I wish you were here, since you wish it; yet from all I hear the period does not seem near. Poor dear Marianne, she goes on suffering; and God knows what would become of her in this incongenial climate. Jane and I dream and talk only of our return; and I begin to think that next autumn, this may be possible. I have been obliged, however, as an indispensable preliminary, to suppress the posthumous poems. More than 300 copies had been sold, so this is the less provok-



ing; **and** I have been obliged to promise not to bring dear **Shelley's** name before the public again during Sir T.'s life. There is no great harm in this, since from **choice** I should not think of writing memoirs now, **and** the materials for a volume of more works are so scant, that I doubted before whether I could publish it. All this was pending when I last wrote, but until I was certain, I did not think it worth while to mention it. The affair is arranged by Peacock, who though I seldom see him, seems anxious to do me all these kind of services, in the best manner that he can.

"Poor Pietro [Gamba] is now in London. 'Non fosse male questo paese,' he says, 'se si vedesse mai il sole.' He is full of Greece, to which he is going to return, **and** gave us an account of our good friend Trelawny, which shows that he is not at all changed. Trelawny has made a hero of the Greek chief Ulysses, **and** declares that there is a great cavern in Attica which he **and** Ulysses, have provisioned for seven years, **and** to which if the cause fails, he **and** this chieftain are to retire; but if the cause is triumphant, he is to build a city in the Negropont, colonize it, **and** Jane **and** I are to go out to be queens **and** chieftainesses of the Island. He has quarrelled very violently **with** Mavrocordato; but I easily divine how all this is. Poor Mavrocordato, beset by covetous Suliotes, **dis**liked by the chieftains of the Morea, caballed against **by** the strangers, poor while every other chief

is getting rich, is drinking deep of the bitter cup of calumny and disappointment.

“One of my principal reasons for writing just now is that I have just heard Miss Curran’s address (64, Via Sistina, Roma), and I am anxious that Marianne should, if she will be so very good, send one of the profiles already cut to her, of Shelley: since I think that by the help of that, Miss Curran will be able to correct her portrait of Shelley, and make for us what we so much desire, a good likeness. I am convinced that Miss Curran will return the profile immediately that she has done with it—so that you will not sacrifice it, though you may be the means of our obtaining a good likeness. I will write soon to Marianne. In the meantime I wish she would write to me, since I long to hear from her, and should be very glad whenever you will be kind enough to assure me of the continuance of your friendship, although I fear it is gone to the ‘tomb of the Capulets.’ But I do not deserve this catastrophe. Give my love to the children—Occhi Turchini among the rest—and believe me ever, my dear Hunt,

“Your faithful friend,

“MARY W. SHELLEY.”

Some weeks later she writes to Mrs. Hunt, in Florence, entreating her to send a profile that she had cut of Shelley to Miss Curran. Mrs. Hunt was very suc-

cessful in cutting outlines out of paper, as the frontispiece in "Lord Byron and his Contemporaries" will attest.

"KENTISH TOWN, Oct. 10th 1824.

"MY DEAREST MARIANNE,—My interest in you and your dear circle, has been excited in the most lively and painful way, by the news I have had of you through Bessy. One's first thought is, can one not in any way aid these beloved exiles?—and then I shrink into myself in despair at my nothingness. If it were not for your's and Hunt's health, I am convinced that Novello's active friendship, would dissipate other difficulties and restore you to the England you love. In the mean time, are there not resources by which you might be rendered more comfortable where you are? J. H. says that Colburn wishes Hunt to contribute to the *New Monthly*. If this be true he would pay liberally, and Hunt need not feel delicacy towards his brother, since the latter has no violent wish that the 'W. C.'s' should be continued. From what J. H. said, perhaps there is a negotiation with Colburn already on foot; if not I can through Horace Smith (who is now in England, and expected daily in London), or in my own person, contribute to such an arrangement. I pray you employ me. I am anxious beyond measure to hear from you—from you my Polly in particular—since you send me the most vivid

picture of what is passing near. Write, if you love me.

“I write to you on the most dismal of all days,—a rainy Sunday; when dreary church-going faces look still more drearily from under dripping umbrellas, and the poor plebeian dame looks reproachfully at her splashed white stockings—not her gown, that has warily been held high up, and the to-be-concealed petticoat has borne all the ill-usage of the mud—dismal though it is, dismal though I am, I do not wish to write a discontented letter, but in a few words to describe things as they are with me. A weekly visit to the Strand, a monthly visit to Shacklewell, (where we are sure to be caught in the rain) forms my catalogue of visits. The eternal rain imprisons me in one's little room, and one's spirits flag without one exhilarating circumstance. I read, study, and write—sometimes that takes me out of myself, but to live for no one, to be necessary to none; to know that—‘where is now my hope? for my hope, who shall see it? they shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.’ But change of scene to the sun of Italy will restore my energy. The very thought of it smooths my brow. Perhaps, never content with the climate, I shall seek the heats of Naples, if they do not hurt my darling Percy.

“We had a fright the other day, fearing that Miss L[amb] was going to be taken ill, but she is now

quite well—so she will escape this year. I was to have dined there to-day had it not been for the rain. She always asks most affectionately after you. Procter is married. The same paper that announced his marriage, gave out the death of Lord C. Murray. I liked his letter to Hunt; I liked the feeling and the conduct of the man—and he is gone. Pietro Gamba is in town; I have seen him often, I talk over old times. Peacock transacts my business with Sir T. S.'s solicitor, else I never see him. Coulson went to France last spring, and has not yet recovered from the enthusiasm inspired by the French women, and Notre Dame. Hazlitt is abroad; he will be in Italy in the winter. He wrote an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the volume of poems which I published—I do not know whether he meant it to be favorable or not—I did not like it at all; but when I saw him I could not be angry; I never was so shocked in my life—he is so changed and thin, his hair is scattered, his cheekbones projecting—but for his voice and smile I should not have known him. His smile brought tears to my eyes—it was like a sunbeam illuminating the most melancholy of ruins—lightning that assured you in a dark night of the identity of a friend's ruined and deserted abode. . . .

“Have you, my Polly, sent a profile to Miss C., in Rome? Now pray do, and pray write; do, my dear girl. Percy is quite well. Tell his friend he goes to

school and learns to read and write, being very handy with his hands—perhaps having a pure anticipated cognition of the art of painting in his tiny fingers.

“Have you heard of Medwin’s book—notes of conversations that he had at Pisa with Lord Byron? Every one is to be in it; every one will be angry. He wanted me to have a hand in it, but I declined. Years ago, when a man died the worms ate him; now a set of worms feed on the carcase of the scandal that he leaves behind him, and grow fat upon the world’s love of little talk—I will not be numbered among them. Adieu.

“Yours affectionately,

“MARY W. SHELLEY.”

October, the following year, finds the Hunts back in England.

They took a cottage in Highgate to be near friends, but financial calamity never pressed more heavily than during the year following their return to England. Mrs. Shelley, with characteristic thoughtfulness, knowing herself the stress of poverty, sent this letter to Hunt. The legacy to which she refers, Shelley had only verbally mentioned to Lord Byron; and Mrs. Shelley’s acknowledgment of the debt is a touching proof of her earnest endeavor to fulfil even the spirit of Shelley’s wishes.

“ BARTHOLOMEW PLACE, KENTISH TOWN.

“ 30th October, 1826.

“ MY DEAR HUNT,—Am I guilty of any want of tact in addressing these few lines to you at the present moment? I trust not; or, if I am mistaken in my hope, yet I entreat you to set down my undelay to the account of over-zeal; and a wish, in part the birth of circumstances, to relieve your mind from a part of that care which I know is now oppressing it. I shall be too happy if you permit any act of mine to have that effect.

“ I told you long ago, that our beloved lost Shelley intended, on rewriting his will, to have left you a legacy; I think the sum he mentioned was £2000 I trust that hereafter you will not refuse to consider me your debtor for that sum, merely because I shall be bound to pay you by the laws of honour instead of a legal obligation. You would of course, have been better pleased to have received it immediately from dear Shelley's bequest; but, as it is well known that he intended to make such an one, it is in fact, the same thing, and so I hope by you to be considered. Besides, your kind heart will receive pleasure from the knowledge that you are bestowing on me the greatest pleasure I am capable of receiving.

“ This is no resolution of to-day's, but formed from the moment that I knew my situation to be such as it is. I did not mention it because it seemed almost

like an empty boast to talk and resolve on things so far off. But futurity approaches, and a feeling haunts me as if *this* futurity was not very distant. I have spoke vaguely on the subject to you before; but now, your having had a recent disappointment, I have thought it as well to explain in exact terms the meaning I attached to my expression.

"I have as yet made no will, but if in the meantime I should chance to die, this paper may serve as a legal document that I give and bequeath to you, dear Leigh Hunt, the sum of two thousand pounds sterling. But I hope we shall both live—I to accomplish our Shelley's intentions, you to honour me as far as to permit me to be the executor.

"I have mentioned this subject to none, and do not intend; an act is not aided by words, especially an act *unfulfilled*; nor do I see that this letter requires an answer—at least not till after the death of Sir Timothy Shelley—when, perhaps, this explanation would have come with a better grace; but I trust your kindness will put my writing now to a good motive:—I am, my dear Hunt, yours affectionately, and very obliged

"MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY.

"TO LEIGH HUNT,\* ESQ."

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\* After the execution of Shelley's will, he had instructed Byron, who was his executor, by mere oral direction, to pay Leigh Hunt a



But, as will be seen by her letter written in 1844, fate denied her nearly twenty years the pleasure of putting her generous intentions into effect.

During the year 1827, Charles Lamb addressed to her one of his charmingly witty letters.

“ ENFIELD, July 26th, 1827.

“ DEAR MRS. SHELLEY,—At the risk of throwing away some fine thoughts, I must write to say how pleased we were, with your very kind remembering of us (who have unkindly run away from all our friends) before you go. Perhaps you are gone, and then my tropes are wasted. If any piece of better fortune has lighted up you than you expected, but less than we wish you, we are rejoiced. We are here trying to like solitude, but have scarce enough to justify the experiment. We get some however. The six days are our Sabbath: the seventh—why Cockneys will come for a little fresh air; and so—

“ But by *your month*, or October at furthest, we hope to see Islington: I, like a giant refreshed with the leaving off of wine; and Mary pining for Mr. Moxon's books, and Mr. Moxon's society. Then we shall meet.

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legacy of 2000*l*. After Shelley's death, Lord Byron, thinking that Shelley had been generous enough to Hunt during his life, refused to take the steps requisite for establishing this direction as a noncupative codicil.

"I am busy with a farce in two acts, the incidents tragic-comic. I can do the dialogue, *commey for*; but the damn'd plot, I believe I must omit it altogether. The scenes come one after another like geese, not marshalling like cranes, or a Hyde Park review. The story is as simple as G [eorge] D [yer]: and the language as plain as his spouse. The characters are three women to one man: which is one more than laid hold on him in the Evangelically. I think that prophecy squinted towards my drama.

"I want some Howard Paine to sketch a skeleton of artfully succeeding scenes through a whole play: as the courses are arranged in a cookery-book. I to find wit, passion, sentiment, character, and the like trifles. To lay in the dead colors: I'd Titianesque 'em up. To mark the channel in a cheek (smooth or furrowed, yours or mine): and where tears should course, I'd draw the water down. To say where a joke should come in, or a pun be left out. To bring my personæ on and off like a Beau Nash: and I'd Frankenstein them there. To bring three together on the stage at once; they are so shy with me that I can get no more than two, and there they stand till it is the time, without being the season to withdraw them.

"I am teaching Emma Latin, to qualify her for a superior governesship, which we see no prospect of her getting. 'Tis like feeding a child with chopt hay

from a spoon. Sisyphus, his labors were as nothing to it.

“Actives and passives jostle in her nonsense, till a deponent enters, like Chaos, more to embroil the fray. Her prepositions are suppositions; her conjunctions copulative have no connection in them; her concords disagree; her interjections are purely English ‘Ah!’ and ‘Oh!’ with a yawn and a gape in the same tongue; and she herself, is a lazy blockheadly supine. As I say to her, *ass in præsenti* rarely makes a wise man *in futuro*.

“But I dare say it was so with you when you began Latin—and a good while after.

“Good-bye! Mary’s love.

“Yours truly,

“C. LAMB.”

A letter from Godwin, in the same year, shows how closely the lives of father and daughter were blended.

“How differently are you and I organized. In my seventy-second year, I am all cheerfulness, and never anticipate the evil day with distressing feelings, till to do so is absolutely unavoidable. Would to God you were my daughter in all but my poverty. But I am afraid you are a Wollstonecraft. We are so curiously made that one atom put in the wrong place in our original structure, will often make us unhappy for life.

"May blessings shower on you as fast as the perpendicular rain, at this moment falls by my window! prays

"Your affectionate father,

"W. G."

The next year we find Godwin writing to his wife from Hastings, where Mrs. Shelley was then staying.

"I found the little trio of this family looking out for me, and we speedily sat down to a comfortable dish of tea at No. 6 Meadow Cottages, and afterwards walked upon the Marine Parade, which immediately overlooks the sea.

"Mary yesterday received her first letter from Tre-lawny, who desires her to come to town immediately: but she has written an answer, telling him he must come here. How the contest will end I know not."

In 1833, Mrs. Shelley went to live at Harrow, to be near her son, who was in school. She was lonely and ill there, but she worked on bravely at her writing. Her strength and spirits were often taxed to their utmost, and she would have been glad to rest from the incessant labor, but beside the expense of her son's education, she contributed largely to the support of her father. She was deeply conscious that her literary work was now the effect of want and pressure from without, rather than an impulse from within.

"You speak of woman's intellect," she writes at a

later date to Mrs. Gisborne: "we can scarcely do more than judge by ourselves. I know that however clever I may be, there is in me a want of eagle-winged resolution that appertains to my intellect as well as to my moral character, and renders me what I am—one of broken purposes, failing thoughts, and a heart all wounds. My mother had more energy of character; still, she had not sufficient fire of imagination. In short, my belief is—whether there be sex in souls or not—that the sex of our material mechanism makes us quite different creatures; better though weaker, but wanting in the higher grades of intellect. I am almost sorry to send you this letter—it is so querulous and sad; yet, if I write with any effusion, the truth will creep out, and my life since you went, has been so strained by sorrows and disappointments, I have no hope. In a few years, when I get over my present feelings, and live wholly in Percy, I shall be happier."

While she was living at Harrow her father visited her frequently; but he was getting old and enfeebled, although his brain was still as active as ever. He wrote to his wife: "We should meet oftener but I rather decline going to her evenings. The evenings are now dark and the walk across the park at a late hour is anything but pleasant."

Two years later, in April, 1836, at the age of eighty, that sage and learned old man,—who had outlived his

own generation and the younger generation of disciples by whom he had been regarded with a superstitious veneration that seems incomprehensible to the present reasoning and balancing mind,—passed quietly away, and was buried by the side of Mary Wollstonecraft, in old St. Pancras church-yard.

However greatly his ideas had changed from hers, or from those which he himself had held, there were no fitter resting-place than by her side. And to the chance observer who strolled into St. Pancras church-yard of an autumn afternoon, and stood over the two willow-shaded stones, on which were written the names of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, the dates of their deaths—so far apart—would not suggest to him that their ideas grew also to be as distant. For Mary Wollstonecraft would never have written courageously about one set of ideas, and followed out another; she would never have pointed out liberal and advanced educational ideas, and deliberately have neglected to use them; never have maintained that marriage laws were pernicious in their influence, and then have ceased any intercourse with her daughter because she had taken an unconventional step; nor have written so ably about morals, political and social, and then repeatedly, in the most promiscuous and barefaced manner, have begged for money to support her family.

Mary Shelley mourned her father's death. She was

tenderly attached to him, and the ties of friendship and affection that remained to her were few and slender.

One can only surmise to what Mrs. Shelley alludes in her journal of October 21, 1838. However, the extreme womanliness of her character shows itself here, the clear judgment, the reasonableness of her mind, the loveliness of her nature; but the courage, the esprit, the indomitable will and vigor are gone, wrung from her not more by solitude than by the world's harasses. "I have so often," she writes, "been abused by pretended friends, for my lukewarmness in the 'good cause' that, though I disdain to answer them, I shall put down here a few thoughts on this subject. I am much of a self-examiner. Vanity is not my fault I think; if it is, it is uncomfortable vanity, for I have none that teaches me to be satisfied with myself; far otherwise,—and if I use the word disdain, it is that I think my qualities (such as they are) not appreciated, from unworthy causes.

"In the first place, with regard to 'the good cause'—the cause of the advancement of freedom and knowledge, of the rights of women, &c.—I am not a person of opinions. I have said elsewhere that human beings differ greatly in this. Some have a passion for reforming the world; others do not cling to particular opinions. That my parents and Shelley, were of the former class, makes me respect it. I respect such

when joined to real disinterestedness, toleration, and a clear understanding. My accusers after such as these, appear to me mere drivellers. For myself, I earnestly desire the good and enlightenment of my fellow-creatures, and see all, in the present course, tending to the same, and rejoice; but I am not for violent extremes, which only bring on an injurious reaction. I have never written a word in disfavor of liberalism; that I have not supported it openly in writing, arises from the following causes, as far as I know:—

“That I have not argumentative powers: I see things pretty clearly, but cannot demonstrate them. Besides I feel the counter arguments too strongly. I do not feel that I could say aught to support the cause efficiently; besides that on some topics (especially with regard to my own sex,) I am far from making up my mind. I believe we are sent here to educate ourselves, and that self-denial, and disappointment, and self-control, are a part of our education; that it is not by taking away all restraining law that our improvement is to be achieved; and, though many things need great amendment, I can by no means go so far as my friends would have me. When I feel that I can say what will benefit my fellow-creatures, I will speak; not before.

“Then I recoil from the vulgar abuse of the inimical press; I do more than recoil—proud and sensitive, I act on the defensive—an inglorious position.



“To hang back as I do brings a penalty. I was nursed, and fed with a love of glory. To be something great and good, was the precept given me by my father; Shelley reiterated it. Alone and poor, I could only be something by joining a party; and there was much in me—the woman’s love of looking up and being guided, and being willing to do anything if any one supported, and brought me forward, which would have made me a good partisan. But Shelley died and I was alone. My father, from age and domestic circumstances, could not ‘*me faire valoir*.’ My total friendlessness, my horror of pushing, and inability to put myself forward unless led, cherished and supported,—all this sunk me in a state of loneliness no other human being ever before I believe, endured—except Robinson Crusoe. How many tears and spasms of anguish this solitude has cost me, lies buried in my memory.

“If I had raved and ranted, about what I did not understand; had I adopted a set of opinions, and propagated them with enthusiasm; had I been careless of attack and eager for notoriety; then the party to which I belonged had gathered round me, and I had not been alone.

“It has been the fashion with these same friends to accuse me of worldliness. There, indeed, in my own heart and conscience, I take a high ground. I may distrust my own judgment too much—be too indo-

lent and too timid ; but in conduct I am above merited blame.

“I like society ; I believe all persons who have any talent (who are in good health) do. The soil that gives forth nothing, may ever lie fallow ; but that which produces—however humble its product—needs cultivation, change of harvest, refreshing dews, and ripening sun. Books do much ; but the living intercourse is the vital heat. Debarred from that, how have I pined and died.

“My early friends chose the position of enemies. When I first discovered that a trusted friend had acted falsely by me I was nearly destroyed. My health was shaken. I remember thinking with a burst of agonizing tears, that I should prefer a bed of torture, to the unutterable anguish that a friend’s falsehood engendered. There is no resentment ; but the world can never be to me what it was before. Trust and confidence, and the heart’s sincere devotion, are gone.

“I sought at that time to make acquaintances,—to divert my mind from this anguish. I got entangled in various ways through my ready sympathy and too eager heart ; but I never crouched to society—never sought it unworthily. If I have never written to vindicate the Rights of Women, I have ever befriended women when oppressed. At every risk, I have befriended and supported victims to the social system ; but I make no boast, for in truth it is simple justice

that I perform; and so I am still reviled for being worldly.

“God grant a happier and a better day is near! Percy—my all in all—will, I trust, by his excellent understanding, his clear, bright, sincere spirit and affectionate heart, repay me for sad long years of desolation. His career may lead me into the thick of life or only gild a quiet home. I am content with either and as I grow older, I grow more fearless for myself—I become firmer in my opinions. The experienced, the suffering, the thoughtful, may at last speak unrebuked. If it be the will of God that I live, I may ally my name yet to ‘the good cause’—though I do not expect to please my accusers.

“Thus have I put down my thoughts. I may have deceived myself: I may be in the wrong; I try to examine myself; and such as I have written appears to me the exact truth.

“Enough of this! The great work of life goes on. Death draws near. To be better after death than in life, is one’s hope and endeavor—to be so through self-schooling. If I write the above, it is that those who love me may hereafter know that I am not all to blame, nor merit the heavy accusations cast on me for not putting myself forward. I *cannot* do that; it is against my nature. As well cast me from a precipice, and rail at me for not flying.”

In 1837, Mrs. Shelley’s son had entered Cambridge,

and in the summer of 1840 she started with him and two of his friends for the Continent. Their destination was the shores of Como, where the students wished to prepare for the degree they expected to take in the following year. They passed through France and Germany into Italy. Mrs. Shelley's letters show with what eagerness she looked forward into that country,—Italy,—crowded with the dearest memories and from which she had been separated by seventeen years of labor and sorrow. With what joy she heard the Italian language again, whose simplest chance phrase on her return to England years before had brought tears to her eyes; and now, on speaking it again, she realized how intimate and homely her use of it had been. All its household terms, its peasant vocabulary, were familiar to her, and it became again more natural to speak to the country people in their tongue than in her own.

Despite that tone of melancholy which pervades all of Mrs. Shelley's later writings, her letters show deep interest in nature, in the people, in places, and an earnest desire to look at all things with the same cheerful pleasure that her son took in them. They travelled much by diligence, and although she suffered keenly from a nervous illness, she was able by these ways to divert her mind, thus relieving her body.

All things interest her,—the life in the open air does her good; the companionship with her son and his

friends brings younger thoughts; the recollection of other days spent in this much-loved Italy gives a tenderness to all she sees.

They settled themselves for two months at Cadenabbia, on Lake Como, in a little inn. Their manner of life was most simple. They had one large salon and four or five small bedrooms adjoining it. Mrs. Shelley selected one little corner of the salon, where she established her desk, her embroidery frame, and her books. She read Italian literature; as it had always been Shelley's and her habit to read the literature of the country in which they were staying. Her son and his friends studied always until noon; at that hour the steamer arrived with letters, then all was eagerness and expectation. At two they dined, and when the sun was beginning to decline, about five, they usually went out on the water or into the woods. The arrival of a boat, ordered by her son, caused her many anxious hours, and when it was returned to its owner, just before their departure for England, she rejoiced that its going left her scathless, although it heralded their departure from Italy.

They spent the next year and a half in England, and in June, 1842, started again for the Continent, spending a month at Kissingen, then on to Dresden, where, with pictures and music, another month passed; thence to Prague and on to Italy.

In Venice, the memory of the time she and Shelley

had spent there with Byron was ever present to her, and the shadows of those Euganean hills that the poets had so loved ever surrounded her. A few weeks in Florence, the birthplace of her son, and then they went down to Rome by sea. Here were the graves of her Shelley and her son William, beside the tomb of Cestius, in the Protestant cemetery. She had not been in Rome since she and Shelley left it, after the death of that son, and now the cypresses that Trelawny planted over the heart of Shelley had seen the changing of the season twenty times.

Here also her son procured a boat, and many of the days were spent on the water. Farther south, and at Naples, the little boat was more and more in use.

The tone of Mrs. Shelley's letters grew more cheerful and restful. The long struggle with poverty was at an end, and brighter days seemed beginning for her. She returned to England in 1843, and the next year, at the death of Sir Timothy, her son succeeded to the title; Charles Shelley having died years before.

In April, during the last days of Sir Timothy's life, Mary Shelley, remembering her promise to Hunt, writes to him from her villa at Putney: "Twenty years ago in memory of what Shelley's intentions were, I said that you should be considered one of the legatees to the amount of 2000*l*. I need scarcely mention that when Shelley talked of leaving you this sum he contemplated reducing other legacies, and that one

among **them** is (by a mistake of the solicitor) just double **what** he intended it to be.\*

“**Twenty** years, have of course much changed my position. Twenty years ago it was supposed that Sir Timothy would not live five years. Meanwhile a large debt has accumulated for I must pay back all on which Percy and I have subsisted, as well as what I borrowed for Percy’s going to college. In fact I scarcely know how our affairs will be. Moreover, Percy shares now my right; that promise was made without his concurrence, and he must concur to render it of avail—nor do I like to ask him to do so till our affairs are so settled that we know what we shall have—whether Shelley’s uncle may not go to law—in short, till we see our way before us.

“It is both my and Percy’s great wish to feel that you are no longer burdened by care and necessity; in that he is as desirous as I can be; but the form and the degree in which we can do this must at first be uncertain.

“**From** the time of Sir Timothy’s death I shall give **directions** to my banker to honor your quarterly **cheques** for 30*l.* a quarter; and I shall take steps to secure **this** to you and to Marianne if she should survive **you**.

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\* Miss Clairmont’s. To whom, in the body of the will, was bequeathed 6000*l.*, a codicil also being added to the same effect. Google

"Percy has read this letter, and approves. I know your *real* delicacy about money matters, and that you will at once be ready to enter into my views; and feel assured that if any present debt should press, if we have any command of money, we will take care to free you from it."

This grant of 120*l.* a year was regularly paid to Hunt throughout the remainder of his life. A letter from Thomas Noon Talfourd on the same subject is well worth quoting. "My dear Hunt," he writes from Sergeant's Inn, in May, "I cannot help writing one line to tell you—no, I cannot tell you—how heartily glad I am of your realizing the blessing intended by the great and good spirit who was so prematurely snatched from you. I feel, in some faint degree, how much it must sweeten and endear the comforts secured to Mrs. Hunt and yourself to know that they are the accomplishment of one of the million generous desires of Shelley's heart—a practical embodiment of that poetry which was lost to this world just as it was becoming happily associated with its realities."

Life added to the leisure and repose which wealth bestowed on Mary Shelley, its crowning blessing in the affectionate companionship and tender reverence of the lady to whom her son a few years after united himself, and from whom she was never separated during the years that remained to her.

But Mrs. Shelley's health grew feebler and more



uncertain. In 1839 she had written with great pain and bodily suffering the notes to the last edition of her husband's poems, and now that by the death of Sir Timothy, all obstacles to writing Shelley's life had been removed, she gathered together her material, and bravely but with trembling powers set about her work. But this labor was denied her; health and strength were most unequal.

She died February 21, 1851, at her house in Chester Square, London, having lived fifty-four years, out of which only eight precious ones were spent in the companionship of her adored Shelley. The first sixteen years being a preparation for their earthly life together, and the last solitary ones, as she earnestly believed, but a means of perfecting her spirit for their renewed life in the future.

She was tenderly laid to rest in Bournemouth church-yard, near the home of her son. And when a few years after it was found necessary to remove the remains of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft from St. Pancras church-yard, the quiet of which had been desecrated by the inroads of London life, they were placed by her side in the same simple church-yard. And in the house of her son, not far distant, lie Shelley's ashes, enshrined in a silver urn.







